

# **Gender Equality Scheme**

**Including**

**Education Service  
Gender Equality Scheme**

**2007 – 2010**

## **ENGLISH**

This document explains what the Council is doing to eliminate gender discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity for men and women in Aberdeenshire area. If you need help to read this document in another language or in another format please telephone 01224 664414 or email [equality@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:equality@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

## **BENGALI**

বাংলা

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## **CANTONESE**

中文 (繁體)

此文件述明亞巴甸郡政府如何消除性別歧視，於其區域範圍致力推廣男女機會平等。

如果你需要中文版供閱讀或其他媒介以助了解內容，請致電01224 664414

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## **LATVIEŠU (LATVIAN)**

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## **Jezyk Polski (POLISH)**

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## **PORTUGUÊS (PORTUGUESE)**

Este documento explica o que a Câmara Municipal de Aberdeenshire está a fazer para eliminar a discriminação entre os sexos e para promover a igualdade de oportunidades para homens e mulheres na área de Aberdeenshire. Se requerer ajuda para ler este documento em português ou num outro formato por favor telefone para o número 01224 664414 ou envie um email para [equality@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:equality@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

## **РУССКИЙ ЯЗЫК (RUSSIAN)**

В этом документе дано разъяснение о том, какую работу проводит региональный совет Абердиншир для того, чтобы ликвидировать дискриминацию по полу с целью активации процесса предоставления равных возможностей мужчинам и

женщинам региона Абердиншир. Если вы хотите прочитать этот документ на русском языке или в другом формате, то, пожалуйста, звоните по телефону: 01224664414 или отправьте электронное сообщение по адресу: [equality@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:equality@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

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## Foreword

Aberdeenshire council's vision sets out our aim to provide *excellent services for all*. As part of this pursuit of excellence we strive to ensure equality of opportunity for all our citizens and employees.

This Gender Equality Scheme describes how the Council will meet its general and specific duties under the Equality Act 2006. It also meets the additional need of the council as an educational authority to have an education gender equality scheme.

The Scheme commits the Council to taking action that will improve gender equality between women and men and girls and boys. It takes account of what people have told us in the regular consultations we carry out of residents and employees, as well as a specific survey we undertook to seek people's views for the Scheme.

We have a strong commitment to equality for all. But we recognise equality is a journey that is continuing and what really matters is improved outcomes for people who may suffer inequality at present. So this scheme will be updated and reviewed on a regular basis.

Over time we will also be working towards a single equalities scheme that brings together our commitment to all the equalities groups defined in law – race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion.

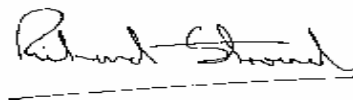
We would be pleased to receive any comments on this scheme or on our progress in implementing it.



.....  
Anne Robertson  
Leader of the council



.....  
Alan G Campbell  
Chief executive



.....  
Richard Stroud  
Chair of the education, learning and  
leisure committee



.....  
Bruce Robertson  
Director of education, learning and leisure

# Introduction

This is Aberdeenshire Council's Gender Equality Scheme. It is organised in ten sections related closely to our legal duties in this area:

- the duty to promote gender equality
- the area of Aberdeenshire
- a profile of equalities groups in Aberdeenshire
- how the Council is organised to deliver its services
- how our work affects men and women and boys and girls
- consulting our employees, service users, trade unions and other stakeholders
- assessing the different impact of our policies and practices on women and men and girls and boys
- our gender equality objectives
- the action plan to achieve our gender equality objectives
- our proposed equal pay statement.

If you have any comments on the scheme or any other enquiries on gender equality, please contact:

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# **The duty to promote gender equality**

This section of the scheme summarises the Council's duty to promote gender equality, which this scheme addresses.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 made it unlawful for any public authority to discriminate on grounds of gender when carrying out any of its functions. In developing our Gender Equality Scheme we have also taken into account four other things.

## **The general duty to promote gender equality**

The new gender equality duty was created by the Equality Act 2006. The act amends the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 to place a statutory duty on all public authorities when carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (including discrimination under the Equal Pay Act 1970) and harassment; and
2. promote equality of opportunity between men and women and boys and girls.

The duty is to the people we serve and to our own staff.

Unlawful discrimination is:

- direct and indirect discrimination against women and men and girls and boys, in employment and education, in providing goods, facilities and services and in the exercise of public functions
- harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity leave
- discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment in employment and vocational training
- direct and indirect discrimination in the employment field on the grounds that a person is married or not married or a civil partner
- victimisation.

Examples of goods the Council provides include sporting equipment used in sports centres and schools, aids for physically disabled people, and bins for collecting household waste. Our facilities include all the buildings and premises we deliver services from. Our services and functions are summarised in the chapter below on how we are organised to deliver our services.

## **The specific duties to promote gender equality**

As well as the general duty, a public authority has to fulfil seven specific gender equality duties

1. produce a Gender Equality Scheme by June 2007, report annually and review every three years

2. produce an Equal Pay Statement (if the body has 150 + staff) by 28 September 2007 and report on progress every three years
3. gather information on how its work affects men and women
4. consult employees, service users, trade unions and other stakeholders
5. assess the different impact of its policies and practices on men and women and use the information to inform their work
6. identify and set gender equality objectives
7. plan and take action to achieve gender equality objectives.

### **The code of practice and guidance**

We have taken account of the Equal Opportunities Commission's gender equality duty statutory code of practice for Scotland and its guidance on the duty for local government in Scotland.

### **The Council's duty as an education authority**

The Council is also the education authority for Aberdeenshire. As well as publishing its own Gender Equality Scheme and Equal Pay Statement, each education authority has to:

- ensure that the schools it manages keep a copy of the scheme and gather information on the effects of their policies and practices on gender equality
- assess the impact of those policies and practices on gender equality for children, young people and staff
- carry out steps to meet the duty, and
- report on these activities.

An education authority's Gender Equality Scheme can be embedded within another strategic document. But it must be clear how each element of the general duty is being addressed within education, specifically:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment (on the grounds of sex and gender reassignment)
- promoting equality between men and women and boys and girls.

Aberdeenshire Council's education Gender Equality Scheme is part of this wider Council General Equality Scheme.

## **The area of Aberdeenshire**

Aberdeenshire is a predominantly rural area in the North East of Scotland. It covers 6,300 sq km, about 8% of Scotland's total land area. The size and dispersed nature of the population make the delivery of some public services challenging and can disadvantage people without easy access to transport like children and some women and disabled people

Traditionally, Aberdeenshire's economy has depended on agriculture, fishing and forestry. In the last 30 years, the oil and gas industry and the service sector have broadened the economic base. As a result, Aberdeenshire has one of the lowest unemployment rates in Scotland. There is major demand for housing, schooling and industrial land in the Aberdeen travel-to-work area. There has also been a significant rise in the demand for housing and schooling in the north of our area due to rapid migration from Eastern Europe. And there is lower but significant demand in the west and south of Aberdeenshire.

There are significant pockets of deprivation in some towns and rural areas. In recognition of this, parts of Peterhead and Fraserburgh receive funding from the Scottish Executive's community regeneration fund.

## A profile of equalities groups in Aberdeenshire

Aberdeenshire has been one of the fastest growing areas in Scotland. It has a population of about 239,000. This section of our gender equality scheme provides a profile of all the main equalities groups. This is for two reasons:

- we intend to move towards one equalities scheme covering all groups
- some people may be affected by more than one inequality. We do not always have the information to prove the scale of these relations but they exist.

### Gender

In 2006, the population of Aberdeenshire was made up of almost equal female and male proportions. By 2021 the total number of people is forecast to fall slightly but the proportion that is female is likely to rise:

	Population 2006		Forecast population 2021	
	No.	%	No.	%
Female	120,420	50.4	119,430	52.1
Male	118,350	49.6	109,920	47.9
TOTAL	238,770	100	229,350	100

Sources: *Mid-year estimate of population, General Register Office for Scotland 2006; Strategic Forecasts for Aberdeenshire 2003 – 2021*

We have no direct evidence of the number of transsexual people in Aberdeenshire. However, Stonewall Scotland suggests that over all 6% of population is lesbian or gay. Thus by extrapolation, there would be 14, 326 gays and lesbians in Aberdeenshire and a far fewer number of transsexuals in the area. In a council employee survey in 2006, 0.1% of those responding said they were transsexual. If this proportion applied to all people aged 20 or over, there would be about 180 transsexual people in Aberdeenshire.

### Ethnicity

The ethnic make up of Aberdeenshire's population of 226,870 in 2001 was:

	%		%
White Scottish	85.6	Other South Asian	<0.1
Other white British	11.9	Chinese	0.1
White Irish	0.4	Caribbean	<0.1
Other white	1.4	African	<0.1
Indian	<0.1	Black Scottish or other black	<0.1
Pakistani	<0.1	Any mixed background	0.2
Bangladeshi	<0.1	Other ethnic group	0.2

<0.1 = less than 0.1%. The definitions of ethnic group are as used in the census

*Source: census of population 2001*

It is likely that both numbers and make up of the minority ethnic groups have changed since 2001, especially since eight Eastern European countries joined the European Union. For example, about 2,000 EU nationals are estimated to have migrated to Aberdeenshire between May 2004 and May 2005. They have mainly settled in Fraserburgh and Peterhead. This has significantly altered the ethnic minority population profile of Aberdeenshire.

The Council's Race Equality Scheme sets out what the Council intends to do to fulfil its duty to promote race equality.

### **Disability**

Disability is a physical or mental impairment, which has an effect on people's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. That effect must be:

- substantial (that is, more than minor or trivial), and
- adverse, and
- long term (that is it has lasted or is likely to last a year or for the rest of the life of the person effected).

Some people have hidden disabilities like poor mental health, HIV or cancer.

The census of population shows the extent of disability in Aberdeenshire and Scotland:

	<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	<b>Scotland</b>
% of people with limiting long-term illness	15.3	20.3
% of working age population with limiting long-term illness	11.2	15.6
TOTAL POPULATION	226,870	5,062,010

*Source: census of population 2001*

The 2001-02 Scottish Household Survey estimated that just under one in five adults in Scotland had a disability and/or long-term illness (Scottish Executive, 2004). On this basis, it could be assumed (based on 2004 estimated population figures) that there are about 47,000 adults and children affected by disability in Aberdeenshire.

The Council's Disability Equality Scheme addresses the council's duties to promote disability equality.

### **Age**

There tends to be slightly more males in the younger and working age groups in the population, but significantly more women in the retired age groups:

	Female		Male	
	No.	% of total	No.	% of total
Under 16	22,880	9.6	23,670	9.9
Working age	69,840	29.2	78,110	32.7
Pensionable age	27,700	11.6	16,570	6.9
TOTAL	120,420	50.4	118,350	49.6

Sources: *Mid-year estimate of population, General Register Office for Scotland 2006*

After growing for many years, the population is likely to decline slightly. But both the proportion and the number of older people is likely to increase significantly:

	Population of pensionable age 2006		Forecast population of pensionable age 2021	
	No.	% of age group	No.	% of age group
Female	27,770	62.6	39,110	61.3
Male	16,570	37.4	24,730	38.7
TOTAL	44,340	100	63,840	100

Source: *Mid-year estimate of population, General Register Office for Scotland 2006; Strategic Forecasts for Aberdeenshire 2003 – 2021*

## Religion

This is how the 226,870 people in Aberdeenshire reported their religion in the 2001 census:

	%		%
Church of Scotland	48.2	Muslim	0.1
Roman Catholic	3.7	Sikh	<0.1
Other Christian	9.5	Another religion	0.9
Buddhist	0.1	None	42.4
Hindu	<0.1	Not answered	4.8
Jewish	<0.1		

<0.1 = less than 0.1%

Source: *census of population 2001*

## Sexual orientation

The Council currently has no reliable data on the sexual orientation of people in Aberdeenshire.

Age, religion and sexual orientation will be included in the council's overall equality scheme.

# How the Council is organised to deliver its services

## The functions of the Council

We seek to ensure gender equality in all the main functions of the Council:

- education and learning – nursery and pre-school provision, primary schools, secondary schools, adult education
- leisure – sports and recreational facilities, arts provision, youth and community learning and development, libraries, museums, public halls
- social work – services for young people, older people, offenders, and people with disabilities or mental illness
- housing – local authority housing, homelessness, housing strategy
- transportation and infrastructure – roads, bridges, property, parks and public space, economic development
- planning and environmental services – planning, waste management, environmental health, catering services, consumer protection
- support services – all corporate, personnel, finance and strategic issues.

We work for the benefit of Aberdeenshire and provide some services through partnership of various sorts with other public bodies, voluntary organisations, businesses and community councils. Sometimes a service may simply be purchased from one of those partners. We call that procurement. Other sorts of procurement we undertake include our own purchase of materials, goods and specialist advice to allow us to deliver our services. We need to make sure that all these partners and providers meet our own standards in gender equality in their work with us.

## The overall direction of the Council

The overall direction of the Council is set by the 68 elected councillors who, together make up the council. The council delegates most of its decision making to a number of committees of councillors:

- Education, Learning and Leisure
- Social Work and Housing
- Infrastructure Services
- Policy and Resources – responsible for agreeing, monitoring and reviewing this gender equality scheme
- six area committees – covering the areas of Banff and Buchan, Buchan, Formartine, Garioch, Kincardine and Mearns and Marr
- a Scrutiny and Audit Committee, which scrutinises the Council's other activities.

## **Responsibility for delivering services and this Gender Equality Scheme**

Day to day responsibility for delivering council services rests with the council's management team:

- the Chief Executive, who leads the team. He has overall responsibility for ensuring the Council meets its gender equality duty and the Council's Policy Officer (Equalities) is based in his service
- Directors of:
  1. Education, Learning and Leisure, who is responsible for delivering our education gender scheme
  2. Housing and Social Work
  3. Transportation and Infrastructure
  4. Planning and Environmental Services
  5. Finance
  6. Law and Administration, and
  7. Personnel and ICT, who chairs the Council's corporate equalities group and is responsible to the Chief Executive for ensuring this Scheme is implemented
- Area Managers - one for each of the council's six administrative areas
- the Head of Policy, who line manages the Policy Officer (Equalities).

## **How our work affects women and men and girls and boys**

We use a number of sources of information in this scheme to judge how our work affects men and women and boys and girls. Some were already in place and analysed regularly. Others were in place but needed a special analysis for the scheme. We also carried out a special survey for this scheme of our employees, citizens, trade unions and other stakeholders to establish their detailed views on the council and gender equality. In all these cases, information is available by people's gender.

Three of the sources we use are based on a sample of those involved – our residents' and employees' surveys, and our citizens' panel. A sample means that only a relatively small proportion of people in the groups involved contribute. In such surveys it is unwise to assume that small differences between groups like women and men are significant. So where we state that men and women have different views this is usually based on a difference of at least 10% in what they say. For example, if 12% of women and 8% of men say a service is poor we do not count this as a difference. But if 19% of women and 8% of men say it is poor we do.

We make the commitment in the action plan with this scheme to improve the information we hold about men and women and boys and girls.

We also use this section of the scheme to highlight examples of good practice to show what we have already achieved.

Our understanding gained from this evidence has been used to develop our gender equality objectives and the action plan. It will also inform the gender impact assessments we will carry out.

Our Education, Learning and Leisure Service gathers a wide range of statistics on subject choice, examination results, attainment, attendance and exclusion. Information is also available nationally. This information will be used to develop more specific gender equality objectives for our education service.

### **The overall results from the special survey we carried out for this scheme**

Over 600 people and organisations answered the questionnaire we sent out for this scheme. About 90% were council staff. We specifically asked about people's awareness of discrimination, harassment and victimisation in the council and its services. Of the 600, these are the number that said they were aware of these problems in employment and vocational training, education, the goods and services we provide, and our facilities. Not everyone answered every question.

Aware of	Employment & vocational training	Education	Goods & services	Facilities
Direct discrimination	32	9	12	11
Indirect discrimination	34	10	7	7
Harassment	12	7	3	2
Victimisation	8	7	2	2

*Source: Aberdeenshire Council gender equality survey 2007*

Details from the survey have been used in the rest of this section where appropriate. The full survey results will be put on our web site and our staff intranet.

### **The extent to which the services we provide and the functions we perform take account of the needs of women and men**

This is about our customers as a council – the people of Aberdeenshire.

Every two years we carry out a large survey of the views of Aberdeenshire residents about the Council, most recently in autumn 2006 when over 3,100 people answered our questions. With our community planning partners, we also run a citizens' panel that seeks the views of 1,300 members on different issues every three months. We have used these sources of information together with the stakeholder survey mentioned above to provide a portrait of the major differences between women and men's views and their experience of the Council.

We do not have systematic evidence of the different extent to which men and women use our services. However, individual citizens' panel surveys have shown a few clear differences, for example:

- 70% of women say that they have undertaken some form of community-based adult learning, but only 30% of men. Despite higher levels of community-based adult learning by women, more women tend to think that activities are at inconvenient times
- two-thirds of women say they use their local library but only half of men
- a majority of both men and women say that their preferred way to contact the Council is by phone, 63% of men and 73% of women
- 30% of women had used the Council's web site to look for a job with the Council, but only 15% of men.

There are often no big differences between the views of men and women on the Council. This is true of many occasions when they think highly of the Council, and also when they do not. For example, a clear majority of both women and men believe that we provide equal opportunities for all people.

Sometimes, the differences between women and men show that women are more satisfied with the Council and its services than men. Examples of this include:

- more women than men believe that the Council is doing a good job in making towns and villages attractive places to live
- they tend to be more satisfied with their children's schools
- they tend to be more satisfied with the standards of road maintenance in Aberdeenshire
- women tend to be more satisfied than men with how the council handles any complaints they make.

On these occasions we need to find out the underlying causes of the differences and to be careful that we are not discriminating against men without realising it.

Areas where women are less satisfied than men include:

- road safety, with significantly more women than men concerned about speeding vehicles
- personal safety after dark, with 40% of women apprehensive about walking outside after dark, compared with 31% of men (in many other aspects of safety in the community there is little difference between men and women's views)
- 55% of women said they had experienced one or more types of barrier to getting a job compared with 42% of men. 13% said that caring for children was a barrier for them compared to 1% of men (with the exception of its own workforce, the Council is not of course responsible for employing people but does have a significant role in economic development).

In the special survey we carried out for this scheme negative comments from residents were relatively few. They included a perception that some council staff treated men or women more favourably or inappropriately because of their gender.

**Examples of good practice where the Council has taken action to meet the different needs of women and men and boys and girls include:**

- we are the lead agency in the Aberdeenshire multi agency domestic abuse partnership, addressing an issue which predominantly affects women. We also support the work of the Grampian domestic abuse training consortium and provide support to adults and children affected by domestic abuse through a specialist team of social workers and family support workers
- our Bags of Books initiative, which is aimed at boys in primary 5 in all our primary schools to encourage home reading
- women and men only sessions in our swimming pools.

## **The extent to which we promote equality between male and female staff**

This is about our council staff.

We have a wide range of statistical information about our staff including staff in schools. Every two years we also carry out a large survey of their views about the council, most recently towards the end of 2006 when over 5,100 staff answered our questions. We have used these sources of information together with the gender equality stakeholder survey mentioned above to help understand the main differences between the characteristics, experience and views of male and female council staff.

These are the proportions of staff in each service that are women and men:

	<b>% Women</b>	<b>% Men</b>	<b>Total No.</b>
Housing and Social Work	86	14	2,862
Education, Learning and Leisure	83	17	7,996
Finance	77	23	295
Chief Executive	76	24	62
Law and Administration	76	24	144
Planning and Environmental services	75	25	2,109
Personnel and IT	51	49	223
Transportation and Infrastructure	18	82	896
COUNCIL	78	22	14,587

*Source: Aberdeenshire council management information report Oct. – Dec. 2006*

Although there is obviously great variation between services, no direct conclusions about equality between men and women should be drawn from these figures alone. They need to be considered with other information. For example, the proportion of women and men in each employee group:

	<b>% Women</b>	<b>% Men</b>
Classroom teacher	84	16
Clerical, administrative, technical, operational	81	19
Professionals	60	40
Principal teachers/educational psychologists	60	40
Head teachers/depute head teachers	60	40
Managers, senior professionals	33	67
Heads of service	20	80
Council management team	7	93

*Source: Aberdeenshire council management information report Oct. – Dec. 2006*

These are the proportions of men and women with different salaries:

<b>Salary banding</b>	<b>% Women</b>	<b>% Men</b>
1 (£10909 – £16518)	82	18
2 (£16929 – £26502)	76	24
3 (£26974 – £39252)	78	22
4 (£39327 – £93698)	57	43

*Figures as at 31 December 2006*

There is also a statutory performance indicator highlighting the top 2% and 5% of earners in councils:

	<b>Women amongst highest paid 2%</b>	<b>Women amongst highest paid 5%</b>
Aberdeenshire	32%	41%
All Scottish councils	32%	38%

*Source: Accounts Commission Statutory Performance Indicators 2005/06*

Taken together, these statistics show that there are differences in the salaries of women and men in the council. They also suggest that there is an element of occupational segregation in the council's workforce. Occupational segregation is when men and women are concentrated in different types of employment, often due to stereotypes about what work is suitable for their gender.

The survey carried out for this scheme asked people if they believed there was occupational segregation in the council. Nearly a quarter said yes, the highest proportion identifying any single issue. We asked people what we could do to eliminate occupational segregation. Many recognised that it had wider social causes than the council could tackle. The main suggestions for action included:

- actively promote recruitment of the other gender to work areas where there is occupational segregation, for example catering, roads, caring, refuse service, administration, social work, teachers, receptionists
- promote gender equality in the Council in schools and at recruitment fairs
- educate and train staff and managers
- appoint more women managers
- ensure the way we recruit staff does not encourage occupational segregation
- provide facilities like toilets and changing rooms for both sexes at workplaces.
- carry out research into the patterns and causes of occupational segregation
- redesign work to ensure we do not discriminate indirectly, for example by unnecessarily putting heavy equipment in awkward places.

We have also analysed staff views expressed in the council's 2006 employee survey. As with other sources of information, they suggest that in many ways women and men share similar views about the council. For example:

	<b>% Women</b>	<b>% Men</b>
Discrimination on the basis of gender is widespread in the council	3	2
Personally experienced discrimination on the basis of gender in the council	2	1
Personally experienced harassment on the basis of gender in the council	1	1

*Source: Aberdeenshire council 2006 employee survey. Equalities report*

Any case of discrimination and harassment is unacceptable. But it is helpful for the further promotion of gender equality within the council that perceptions of the amount of discrimination and harassment are so low, especially as people's personal experience could relate to any time they worked in the council.

It is also helpful that 59% of both men and women believe there is a good or very good commitment to promoting equality and diversity in the council as a whole.

In virtually every case where there is a significant difference in the views of men and women, the views of men about the council are less positive than women.

In relation to their *work* men are less likely to:

- be satisfied with the work that they do, their salary and pay, terms and conditions, equipment, materials and premises, support/information from management and colleagues, and the recognition that they get from customers
- say that they enjoy the work they do
- believe their job has clear objectives
- rate their access to training and development as satisfactory
- feel their efforts are recognised and valued
- feel positive about various issues relating to their team.

In relation to *communications within the Council*, men are less likely than women to believe that team briefings keep them "in the know". They are less likely to provide good ratings for the various aspects of council communications.

Men are more negative than women about many of the issues associated with *leadership and management* in the Council.

This difference in views contrasts with the facts about men and women's salaries and seniority in the Council. Research carried out elsewhere suggests that these sorts of differences may be associated with different expectations of work by men and women.

**Examples of good practice where the Council has taken action to promote equality between male and female staff include:**

- the Chrysalis development programme, designed to increase the number of women managers and leaders in the council through developing women's skills, abilities and confidence. Almost half of those attending the first five courses changed their job after attending the programme. One-third had applied for senior jobs
- a range of family friendly policies designed to make work easier for staff with family commitments, for example – flexible working hours, teleworking and special leave.

**Aberdeenshire's councillors**

Following the council elections in May 2007, 19 out of our 68 councillors are women, or 28%. Ten are new councillors. The selection of candidates for election to a council is the responsibility of political parties or, in the case of independent councillors, a matter for individual decision. But there may be some possible actions that the Council could take to encourage more women to seek election to the council.

## **Consulting our employees, service users, trade unions and other stakeholders**

This section describes how we have consulted employees, service users, trade unions and other stakeholders in developing our scheme. Consultation has been supplemented by information we already gather.

### **Consultation in developing the scheme**

A survey was carried out seeking people's views on the extent and nature of direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation in respect of council employment and vocational training, education, provision of goods and services, and facilities. It also sought views on awareness of occupational segregation in the Council's workforce and steps that might be taken to alleviate any problems. 607 people or organisations responded to the survey, 90% of them were council employees. Others contributing included service users, community councils, a trade union, migrant workers, and some people who chose not to identify their interest. 69% of individual respondents were female, 28% male and 3% declined to answer. A small number of organisations declined to take part because they did not know enough about gender equality and the Council.

The main results of the survey are included above in the section on how our work affects women and men and girls and boys.

The group that developed the scheme included trade union representatives.

### **Consultation on the draft scheme**

Our draft Gender Equality Scheme was completed on 1 June 2007 and immediately publicised on our web site and intranet and sent to trade unions, community councils and a cross section of local contacts for comment. The education service consulted with school staff, parents' groups, the education psychology service, trade unions and others. Comments were accepted until the day before our policy and resources committee approved the scheme. All comments received were considered for inclusion in the final version of the Scheme. We see the scheme as a living document, which will continue to change and improve as we identify more issues through gender impact assessments and feedback from our stakeholders.

## **Assessing the different impact of our policies and practices on men and women and boys and girls**

We commit ourselves to assessing the different impact of our policies and practices on men and women and boys and girls. We will do this through what is commonly called *equality impact assessment*.

We have already developed a way to do this with our equality and diversity impact assessment toolkit, which can be accessed on our website and intranet. When we use this it will specifically take into account the purposes of gender equality impact assessment as described by the Equal Opportunities Commission:

- to ensure that neither sex is disadvantaged by our decisions and activities
- to identify where we can promote equality of opportunity between men and women and boys and girls.

The action plan in this scheme commits us to a continuing programme of equalities impact assessments. It also includes a commitment to assess our new strategic plan that will determine the council's overall direction from 2007 to 2010. We will prioritise other impact assessments to address the most significant gender inequalities we have identified. In doing this we are most likely to focus on our functions or policies that have most effect on the people we serve or on our staff, or on major parts of those two groups.

Because we are only beginning to implement equalities impact assessment, we need to maximise our understanding from our first assessments. Therefore, as well as the assessment of our new strategic plan, we will ensure that one policy or area of work in each of our eight services is assessed by the end of 2007. We are substantially through a programme of training that will allow relevant staff to carry out these assessments. Trained staff from other services will support colleagues in any particular service in their first assessments.

## Our gender equality objectives

The Council adopted a new vision in 2006:

### **Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland**

#### *The best area*

Helping to create and sustain the best quality of life for all through...

- happy, healthy and confident people
- safe, friendly and lively communities
- an enterprising and adaptable economy
- our special environment and diverse culture

#### *The best council*

Aiming to provide excellent services for all by . . .

- involving, responding and enabling
- finding new and more efficient ways of doing things
- providing elected leadership for our area
- working with our partners in the North East and beyond
- always looking to the future

Arising from this, we have amended our previous equality vision statement to read:

#### *The best council*

Aiming to provide equality of opportunity for all by...

- being free of prejudice, discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ensuring people's race, disability, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation does not disadvantage them
- involving, responding to and enabling those lacking equality of opportunity
- taking positive action where necessary.

Bearing in mind these statements and what we know of how our work affects men and women and boys and girls, we commit ourselves to the following gender equality objectives.

### Our gender equality objectives

We aim to:

1. ensure that the services we provide are free from direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of gender and promote equal opportunities for men and women and boys and girls
2. ensure that the way we work encourages both women and men to seek election as Aberdeenshire councillors
3. identify what our staff want from their career with the council and enable them to achieve that wherever possible regardless of their gender
4. identify and break down any barriers within the council that create occupational segregation on the basis of gender between our staff
5. have a culture within the council that supports the achievement of these objectives  
  
and
6. take positive action where necessary to achieve these objectives.

## **The action plan to achieve our gender equality objectives**

These are the actions we will take to help us achieve our gender equality objectives. They take into account all the evidence we describe above about women and men and boys and girls, both the people of Aberdeenshire and our own staff, as well as our other stakeholders. Each action will be described in more detail in the appendix to this scheme, setting out:

- a completion date
- who is responsible for the action
- the effect, or outcome, we intend from taking the action and
- which parts of the gender duty and gender equality objective it helps fulfil.

### **The actions we will take**

#### For our residents

ACTION 1. We will review and where appropriate amend the information we hold and analyse about the users of our services so that we can ensure we do not inadvertently discriminate against people on the grounds of their gender

ACTION 2. Our Customer Service Project Team will review whether any of our customer services policies and practices need amendment in order to ensure gender equality

#### For our councillors

ACTION 3. Within a year of the May 2007 election we will survey the views of women councillors to determine whether changes in the way the council works could help more women seek election to the council in future

ACTION 4. We will offer awareness and training in equalities, including gender equality, to all councillors

#### For our staff

ACTION 5. We will review every aspect of our recruitment process to ensure that it does not inadvertently discriminate against either gender

ACTION 6. Our Transportation and Infrastructure and Planning and Environmental Services will pilot the Council's "trendbusters" initiative, working with staff of the minority gender in functions where there is occupational segregation, to identify (1) factors that led them to seek work in that function (2) any barriers they had to overcome or still face in their work and (3) what further could be done to reduce occupational segregation in that function

ACTION 7. We will review the success of the Transportation and Infrastructure and Planning and Environmental services “trendbusters” pilot and where appropriate extend it to all our functions where there is occupational segregation

ACTION 8. We will begin a new cycle of our successful Chrysalis programmes to increase the number of women managers and leaders in the council through developing their skills, abilities and confidence

ACTION 9. We will review our staff equalities awareness and training programme to ensure it meets the needs of managers and staff in relation to the Council’s gender equality duty

ACTION 10. We will review the format and content of our staff development and training programmes to ensure that they do not inadvertently discriminate against part-time staff or those with family responsibilities

ACTION 11. We will develop a personnel policy for staff suffering from or perpetrating domestic abuse

ACTION 12. We will agree an Equal Pay Statement by the statutory deadline of 28 September 2007

ACTION 13. We will monitor the impact of our implementation of single status to assess its impact on the gender balance within our workforce

#### For our partners

ACTION 14. We will discuss with our community planning partners how equality of opportunity for all equalities groups including men and women and boys and girls can be embedded within our partnership work

#### For more than one group of stakeholders

ACTION 15. Each service of the council will produce its own gender action plan to support the Council gender equality scheme and address any gender issues specific to its own service

ACTION 16. We will institute a continuing programme of equalities impact assessment of our policies and practices that specifically addresses gender issues. In particular we will undertake:

- an equalities impact assessment of our new strategic plan
- at least one equalities impact assessment in each of our eight services by the end of 2007
- a smart programme of impact assessment will be agreed for each year (June)

ACTION 17. We will fill the gap in our understanding of the needs of transsexual residents and staff with the aim of ensuring that they do not suffer direct or indirect discrimination. Other actions may flow from this.

ACTION 18. We will continue to ensure that our regular two-yearly residents' and staff surveys (1) ask contributors to identify their gender so that we can identify significant differences in the experiences and views of men and women and (2) include the publication of an associated equalities report for each survey

### Procurement

ACTION 19. We will review and where necessary update all relevant contracts and service level agreements with organisations that provide us or the people of Aberdeenshire on our behalf, with goods and services, to ensure that they do not discriminate on the grounds of gender and other equalities

### This scheme

ACTION 20. We will report annually on progress in implementing our gender equality scheme

ACTION 21. We will review our gender equality scheme every three years

### Education

In addition our education service will take action to:

- reduce the attainment gap between boys and girls
- address differences in subject choice between girls and boys
- reduce the numbers of boys excluded from schools
- address the imbalance between men and women employed in different sectors within the education service.

These actions will be included in the Education, Learning and Leisure Service action plan (see ACTION 15 above).

## Equal pay statement

The council is required by law to publish an equal pay statement by 28 September 2007. The statement must set out our policy on equal pay between men and women throughout the council including our education service.

We are one of the first councils in Scotland to reach agreement with our trade unions on what is called “single status”. This recognises that councils have been open to challenge under equal pay legislation where men or women in jobs of equal worth are paid differently. It is designed to ensure this does not happen in future.

When this scheme was published, we were beginning to implement single status. The Council’s Policy and Resources Committee will agree our Equal Pay Statement on 20 September 2007. It will take account of the progress we have made with implementing single status by that date. It will also take account of the Equal Opportunities Commission’s code of practice on equal pay.

When it is agreed, our equal pay statement will be incorporated into this gender equality scheme.

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME 2007-2010  
ACTION PLAN SCHEDULES

Each action states which of the general (GEN) and specific (SP) gender equality duties it is intended to help meet:

- GEN1 eliminate unlawful discrimination under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (including discrimination under the Equal Pay Act 1970) and harassment
- GEN2 promote equality of opportunity between men and women.
- SP1 produce a Gender Equality Scheme by June 2007, report annually and review every three years
- SP2 produce an Equal Pay Statement (if the body has 150 + staff) by 28 September 2007 and report on progress every three years
- SP3 gather information on how its work affects women and men
- SP4 consult employees, service users, trade unions and other stakeholders
- SP5 assess the different impact of its policies and practices on men and women and use the information to inform their work
- SP6 identify and set gender equality objectives
- SP7 plan and take action to achieve gender equality objectives.

Each action also states which gender equality objective it is intended to help fulfil:

- OBJ1 ensure that the services we provide are free from direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of gender and promote equal opportunities for men and women and boys and girls
- OBJ2 ensure that the way we work encourages both women and men to seek election as an Aberdeenshire councillor
- OBJ3 to identify what our staff want from their career with the council and enable them to achieve that wherever possible regardless of their gender
- OBJ4 to identify and break down any barriers within the council that create occupational segregation on the basis of gender between our staff
- OBJ5 to have a culture within the council that supports the achievement of these objectives
- OBJ6 to take positive action where necessary to achieve these objectives.

## ACTION PLAN 2007 - 2010

Action No. 1	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
We will review and, where appropriate, amend the information we hold and analyse about the users of our services including school pupils of our education service so that we can ensure we do not inadvertently discriminate against people on the grounds of their gender	June 2008	Chief Executive & Directors	Equality of access to our services by all gender groups through effective monitoring of all our service users.	GEN1&2 and OBJ1
Action No. 2	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
Our Customer Service Project Team (CSPT) will review whether any of our customer services policies and practices need amendment in order to ensure gender equality	June 2008	Management Team Lead for CSPT	Customer services policies comply with the gender duty and promote equality of opportunities for men and women	GEN1&2 and SP3&4 OBJ1,5&6
Action No. 3	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
Within a year of the May 2007 election we will survey the views of women councillors to determine whether changes in the way the council works could help more women seek election to the council in future	May 2008	Law and Admin Equalities Officer & Members' Support staff	To encourage more women to seek election as Aberdeenshire Councillors	GEN1, GEN2, SP4, OBJ2
Action No. 4	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
We will offer awareness and training in equalities, including gender equality, to all councillors.	February 2008	Development and Training Manager (Janet North)	Awareness of gender equality issues among Aberdeenshire Councillors; gender equality is embedded into Aberdeenshire Council and it's interactions with the public of Aberdeenshire	GEN1; GEN2; OBJ1; OBJ2; OBJ4; OBJ5

Action No.	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
Action No. 5				
We will review every aspect of our recruitment process to ensure that it does not inadvertently discriminate against either gender.	October 2007	Personnel Manager	A process, which does not discriminate against either gender.	GEN1; GEN2
Action No. 6	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
Our Transportation & Infrastructure and Planning & Environmental Services will pilot the Council's "trendbusters" initiative, working with staff of the minority gender in functions where there is occupational segregation, to identify (1) factors that led them to seek work in that function (2) any barriers they had to overcome or still face in their work and (3) what further could be done to reduce occupational segregation in that function	Sept 2007	Support Services Managers (T&I/P&ES)	To identify (1) factors that led the minority gender staff to seek work in that function (2) any barriers they had to overcome or still face in their work and (3) what further could be done to reduce occupational segregation in that function	GEN 2, SP 1, 3-7, OBJ 1, 3-6
Action No. 7	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
We will review the success of the Transportation & Infrastructure and Planning & Environmental Services "trendbusters" pilot and where appropriate extend it to all our functions where there is occupational segregation	June 2008	Chief executive & directors	Elimination of gender Occupational segregation	GEN1; GEN2 SP3, 4,5,6, &7 OBJ1, 3,4,5&6

Action No. 8	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
We will begin a new cycle of our successful Chrysalis programmes to increase the number of women managers and leaders in the council through developing their skills, abilities and confidence.	New Chrysalis programme expected to start in early September through to December	Employee Development Officer (Anne Williamson)	To encourage and increase the number of women in managerial and leadership positions.	GEN1; GEN2; OBJ1; OBJ3; OBJ4; OBJ6
Action No.9	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
We will review our staff equalities awareness and training programme to ensure it meets the needs of managers and staff in relation to the Council's gender equality duty.	February 2008	Development and Training Manager (Janet North)	To raise awareness of gender equality issues, and promote gender equality with managers and staff of the Council, therefore, embedding gender equality into Aberdeenshire Council	GEN1; GEN2; OBJ4; OBJ5
Action No. 10	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
We will review the format and content of our staff development and training programmes to ensure that they do not inadvertently discriminate against part-time staff or those with family responsibilities.	June 2008	Head of Development and Training	Ensure the content of any training programme is not discriminatory directly or indirectly to any gender, and that there is equal opportunity to attend training.	GEN1; GEN2; SP5; OBJ1; OBJ3;
Action No. 11	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
We will develop a personnel policy for staff suffering from or perpetrating domestic abuse.	July 2008	Personnel Manager (P&ICT) & Head of Strategic Development (H&SW)	Council approved Personnel Policy in place and implemented.	GEN1; GEN2
Action No. 12	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
We will agree an Equal Pay Statement by the statutory deadline of 28 September 2007.	20 September 2007	Single Status Project Manager	Equal Pay Statement agreed by Policy & Resources Committee of the Council.	GEN1; GEN2

Action No. 13	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
We will monitor the implementation of single status to assess its impact on the gender balance within our workforce.	July 2008	Single Status Project Manager	Having had the Single Status Scheme impact assessed by an independent assessor when it was developed, there will be independent impact assessments undertaken on an annual basis.	GEN1; GEN2
Action No. 14	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
We will discuss with our community planning partners how equality of opportunity for all equalities groups including men and women and boys and girls can be embedded within our partnership work	Dec 2007 and thereafter as may be required	Policy Officer (Community Planning)	Gender equality is mainstreamed into Aberdeenshire partnership working	GEN1&2;SP7; and OBJ2 &5
Action No. 15	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
Each Service of the council will produce its own gender action plan to support the council gender equality scheme and address any gender issues specific to the service	June 2008	Chief Executive & Directors	The Council achieves its gender equality objectives and meets the gender duty.	SP6&7 and OBJ6

Action No. 16	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
<p>We will institute a continuing programme of equalities impact assessment of our policies and practices that specifically addresses gender issues.</p> <p>b. As part of our programme of equality impact assessment of policies we will assess the following during the first year of the Scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's new Strategic Plan</li> <li>• School exclusions policy (EL&amp;L)</li> <li>• Fraud policy (Finance)</li> <li>• Customer Care Policy (Finance)</li> <li>• Disciplinary Policy (P&amp;ICT)</li> <li>• Autism Strategy (H&amp;SW)</li> <li>• "Have Your Say" - our Compliments, Comments and Complaints procedure (CE)</li> <li>• Service Plan (Law &amp; Administration)</li> <li>• Service Plan (Planning &amp; Env'tl Services)</li> <li>• Roads: Design, Maintenance &amp; Public Transport (T&amp;I)</li> </ul> <p>c. a SMART programme of impact assessment to be agreed for each year by June</p>		Chief Executive & Directors	Policies that are free from gender bias and promote equality of opportunity and good relations within the Council	GEN1&2; SP5; and OBJ1, 5&6.
	Dec. 2007	Policy Manager (CE)		
	Dec. 2007	Senior EL&L Officer (Inclusion)		
	Dec. 2007	Director of Finance		
	Dec. 2007	Director of Finance		
	Dec. 2007	Personnel Manager		
	Feb. 2008	Head of Strategic Dev		
	March 2008	Policy Officer – Quality & Improvement		
	May 2008	Service's equalities lead officer		
	Oct. 2007	Support Services Mgr		
	May 2008	Principal Engineer - Roads		
	June each year	Policy Officer (Equalities)		

Action No. 17	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
We will fill the gap in our understanding of the needs of transsexual residents and staff with the aim of ensuring that they do not suffer direct or indirect discrimination. We will ensure that appropriate actions flow from this (each service will contribute through monitoring of service users).	Ongoing - to be continued as required	Chief Executive and Directors	Elimination of unlawful discrimination against transsexual people in our practices and employment	GEN1&2; SP1, 2&3 and OBJ1, 5&6
Action No 18	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
Continue to ensure that our regular two-yearly residents' and staff surveys (1) ask contributors to identify their gender so that we can identify significant differences in the experiences and views of men and women and (2) include the publication of an associated equalities report for each survey	Dec. 2008	Policy officer - Quality & Improvement	Better understanding of, and more responsive approach, to the needs of men and women	GEN1&2; SP3, 4,6&7 and OBJ1-6
Action No. 19	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
We will review and where necessary update all relevant contracts and service level agreements with organisations that provide us or the people of Aberdeenshire on our behalf with goods and services.	Ongoing	Purchasing Manager	To ensure the organisations we do business with do not discriminate on the grounds of gender and other equalities	GEN1, GEND2, SP4, SP5, OBJ6
Action No. 20	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
We will report annually on progress in implementing our gender equality scheme		Policy Officer - Equalities	The Council achieves its gender equality objectives and meets the gender duty.	GEN1&2; SP1&7; and OBJ1, 5&6

Action No. 21	Completion date	Responsible officer	Intended outcome	Gender duty & objective met
We will review our gender equality scheme every three years		Policy Officer - Equalities	The Council achieves its gender equality objectives and meets the gender duty.	GEN1&2; SP1-7; and OBJ1; 5&6