

# Tendring District Council



## Gender Equality Scheme

2007 - 2010

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# Tendring District Council Gender Equality Scheme 2007-10

CONTENTS	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	5
SETTING THE CONTEXT	6
BACKGROUND:	
GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME	8
<b>General Duty</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Specific Duty</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Enforcement</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Who is covered by the Duty</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Benefits of the Scheme</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Outcomes – the changes to which the gender equality     duty should lead</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>How the gender equality duty fits into the broader     equality picture</b>	<b>13</b>
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN TENDRING	
<b>Our population</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Position Statement</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan</b>	<b>16</b>
LEADERSHIP AND CORPORATE COMMITMENT	17
<b>Employment and Training</b>	<b>18</b>
GENDER EQUALITY OBJECTIVES	21
<b>Objective 1 – Promoting gender equality for employees     And customers</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Objective 2 – Tackling discrimination and harassment     On the grounds of gender</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Objective 3 – Gaining an improved understanding of     Employee and customer needs</b>	<b>22</b>
GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME – AVAILABILITY	22
FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS	23
ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGES AND FORMATS	23

# Introduction from Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive

Tendring District Council is committed to equal opportunities and we are actively working to eliminate discrimination and to promote equal opportunities and good relations between people. We are committed to providing equality of access to our services for all our residents and other people visiting and working in this district and to recruiting a workforce that is representative of the population it serves.

The Council's vision is: "To become a cleaner, safer and thriving district with a high quality environment and a strong local community"

We can only achieve this vision by developing strong, secure, self-reliant and self-confident communities, free from unlawful discrimination. By putting our communities first and working with our customers and local organisations we aim to continuously improve our services and provide effective local government in the district. Also we aim to be a good employer by taking our staff forward with us, ensuring equality of opportunity and pay for all employees.

This document sets out our aims and objectives, and the practical ways in which the Council plans to approach equalities issues in respect of gender.

Terry Allen  
**Executive Leader**

John Hawkins  
**Chief Executive**

# Setting the context for equalities at Tendring District Council

The district has a diverse population and workforce and as a local authority we want to ensure that all our community and employees are treated fairly and equitably and that their individual needs are taken into consideration whenever possible.

To achieve these objectives we need to make sure that equality is embedded in all our policies, procedures and planning processes. Our aim, along with our priority statements below, reinforces this ethos.

***“It is our aim to become a modern, healthy and well-managed organisation”***

We are working to achieve this aim with our partners in order to achieve:

- **A strong local economy by:**

- Ensuring that sufficient land is made available through the District Local Plan
- Creating jobs
- Exploiting development opportunities through planning decisions
- Increasing inward investment
- Regenerating the rural economy through appropriate diversification and improved access

- **A cleaner district by**

- Improving customer satisfaction
- Improving cleanliness as measured by the Audit Commission's cleanliness indicator
- Increasing recycling
- Reducing the impact of fly tipping and abandoned vehicles

- **A safer community by**

- Reducing fear of crime and crime levels in the district through the use of CCTV and other crime reduction initiatives
- Being well prepared for civil emergencies

- **Affordable and decent housing by**

- Working to increase the supply of decent affordable homes in towns and villages
- Improving the quality of housing in the district
- Providing support and advice to those who are homeless
- Providing an efficient benefits system

- **Better public space by**

- Enhancing our town centres and conservation areas

- Providing attractive seafronts and good quality leisure facilities
- Maintaining the green environment
- Improving local transport links
  
- **A willing partner and community leader by**
  - Being an effective leader of the Local Strategic Partnership
  - Leading by example
  - Listening to the community
  - Addressing the needs of young and old
  - Encouraging responsible citizenship
  
- **Earning a positive public image by**
  - Providing greater choice of contact (e.g. phones, face-to-face and internet)
  - Making our buildings more accessible
  - Putting the customer first

In addition we will work with the communities of Tendring to improve their quality of life and to ensure that we provide a range of responsive and valued services.

These objectives will be achieved by putting our communities first and working with local people and local organisations to secure continuous service improvement and better Local Government.

We aim to achieve continuous improvement and be efficient and effective in the way we use our resources and work with others, and to be an open accessible and helpful Council, with a well-informed community whose views count.

Equalities continue to be a priority action for the whole Council and we will work to ensure that this becomes part of our ethos. All service areas of the Council will work to equalities targets and priorities contained in the action plan set out in Appendix A of this policy.

# BACKGROUND

## Gender Equality Scheme

The duty is made up of two elements, the 'general' duty and the 'specific' duties. The general duty is the overall duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality.

### **General Duty:**

With effect from the 6 April 2007, the Equality Act will amend the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) 1975 by introducing a statutory gender equality duty on public bodies such as Tendring District Council. This means that when carrying out all their functions, public bodies must have due regard to the need:

- ***To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex***
- ***To promote equality of opportunity between women and men.***

"Unlawful discrimination" in relation to gender is defined as:

- Direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of sex
- Discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity leave
- Discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment
- Direct and indirect discrimination against married persons and civil partners
- Victimisation
- Harassment and sexual harassment.

Functions include policy-making, service provision, employment matters, and statutory discretion, as well as decision-making. 'Due regard' means that authorities should give due weight to the need to promote gender equality in proportion to its relevance.

The duty requires organisations to take action on the most important gender equality issues within their functions. The promotion of equal opportunities between women and men requires public authorities to recognise that the two groups are not starting from an equal footing and identical treatment will not always be appropriate. Under the duty authorities also have an obligation to eliminate discrimination and harassment towards current and potential transsexual staff. This duty will extend to transsexual service users in December 2007.

## Specific Duty:

The specific duties are not an objective in themselves, but a means of meeting the general duty and require every authority to:

- Prepare and publish a **gender equality scheme**, showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives.
- Consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any **gender pay gap** in formulating its overall objectives.
- **Gather and use information** on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.
- **Consult** stakeholders (i.e. employees, service users and others, including trade unions) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives.
- **Assess the impact** of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality.
- **Implement** the actions set out in its scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so.
- **Report** against the scheme every year and **review** the scheme at least every three years.

Public authorities that are subject to the specific duties must publish their gender equality schemes by 30 April 2007.

## Enforcement:

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) will actively enforce the duty. However, from October 2007 this function will be carried out by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR).

The extent to which a public authority has complied with the duty is likely to be assessed on the following criteria:

**Information:** does the public authority have the information that allows it to understand the impact of its work on women and on men (including transsexual women and men)? For example, is it collecting and analysing gender disaggregated data?

**Consultation:** have the relevant people inside and outside the authority been involved in appropriate ways, in providing information and identifying gender equality

priorities? For example, voluntary and community organisations with specialist knowledge on gender equality would be highly appropriate to consult.

**Transparency:** has information about the gender equality scheme been widely available through appropriate channels and in a variety of formats? This should include details of decision-making processes, priorities, actions as well as updates on progress.

**Proportionality:** in addressing the duty, has the public authority put its effort and resources where they will have most impact on gender equality (and have they done enough to find out what the most significant issues are?)

**Effectiveness:** has action been taken and has it delivered the required outcomes, leading to less discrimination and greater gender equality?

The CEHR will be able to issue compliance notices to authorities that are failing to meet the **general duty**. The EOC, then the CEHR will be able to issue compliance notices on the **specific duties**. These are enforceable in the courts. Notices state that the authority must meet the duty and instruct them to tell the EOC/CEHR within 28 days what they have done to comply.

If a public authority (including a private or voluntary organisation exercising public functions) does not comply with the **general** duty, its actions or failure to act can also be challenged through an application to the High Court/Court of Session for judicial review. An application for judicial review could be made by a person or group of people with an interest in the matter, or by the EOC/CEHR.

Finally, public sector inspection bodies are also subject to the duty and will therefore have to pay due regard to the duty in their functions. This means that they will have to integrate the requirements of the gender duty into their monitoring and inspection frameworks and processes.

## **Who is covered by the duty?**

The general duty applies to all public bodies (or public authorities). This includes government departments and executive agencies, colleges and universities, schools, NHS Trusts and Boards, local authorities (councils), police and fire authorities, inspection and audit bodies and many publicly funded museums.

The duty also covers private and voluntary organisations carrying out public functions, such as private organisations running prisons.

The gender equality duty also applies to functions that are carried out by external contractors, as well as those that are carried out directly by the public authority itself. Legal liability for meeting the duty remains with the public body, which is expected to take action to ensure contractors meet the requirements of the duty.

## Benefits of the Scheme:

The duty placed on a local authority to promote a Gender Equality Scheme aims to make gender equality central to the way that a public body works, in order to create:

- a better-informed decision-making and policy development
- a clearer understanding of the needs of service users
- better-quality services which meet varied needs
- more effective targeting of policy and resources
- better results and greater confidence in public services
- a more effective use of talent in the workforce.

The duty is intended to address the fact that, despite 30 years of individual legal rights to sex equality, there is still widespread discrimination – sometimes intentional, sometimes unintentional – and persistent gender inequality. Policies and practices that seem neutral can have a significantly different effect on women and on men, often contributing to greater gender inequality and poor policy outcomes. Individual legal rights have not been enough by themselves to change this.

The duty is intended to improve this situation, both for men and for women, for boys and for girls. Gender roles and relationships structure men's and women's lives. Women are frequently disadvantaged by policies and practices that do not recognise their greater caring responsibilities, the different pattern of their working lives, their more limited access to resources and their greater vulnerability to domestic violence and sexual assault. Men are also disadvantaged by workplace cultures that do not support their family or childcare responsibilities, by family services that assume they have little or no role in parenting, or by health services that do not recognise their different needs. Both sexes suffer from stereotyping of their roles and needs. The duty should help the public sector, and those working with it, to identify and respond to stereotyping, sex discrimination and sexism, resulting in improvements for all.

The duty requires public authorities to identify and tackle discrimination, to prevent harassment, and to ensure that their work promotes equality of opportunity between men and women. It is a form of legally enforceable 'gender mainstreaming' thereby building gender equality into the core business thinking and processes of an organisation. It is different from previous sex equality legislation in two crucial respects:

- Public authorities have to be proactive in eliminating discrimination and harassment, rather than waiting for individuals to take cases against them.
- Public authorities have to be proactive in promoting equality of opportunity, and not just avoiding discrimination.

## **Outcomes – the changes to which the gender equality duty should lead:**

The aim of the duty is not to establish processes but to make visible and faster progress towards gender equality. Indicators of progress might include:

- Service-users notice that services are more accessible and better tailored to their needs, and service outcomes by gender begin to improve.
- Women and men are making greater use of services that their sex had previously under-used.
- Service-users with caring responsibilities are receiving appropriate support, such as better pushchair access on public transport and crèche facilities.
- Fathers receive greater support for their childcare responsibilities from public services and employers.
- Girls have higher aspirations for their future careers.
- Women and men from all groups feel effectively engaged in decision and policy-making around issues that have a direct effect on them.
- Women and men are represented at all levels of the workforce and in all areas of work.
- Harassment and sexual harassment of staff, service users and others is dealt with promptly and systematically, according to agreed procedures, and tolerance of harassment drops within the organisation as a whole.
- The reported level of discrimination experienced by pregnant staff and staff returning from maternity leave reduces significantly and is eventually eliminated.
- The gap between women and men's pay narrows and is eventually eliminated.
- Employees with caring responsibilities are receiving greater support from the public authority, including flexible and part-time working opportunities at all levels of work.
- Transsexual people feel supported and valued as staff and potential staff.
- Barriers to the recruitment and retention of transsexual staff have been identified and removed.

- Employees are aware of the gender equality duty, understand how it will affect their work, and have the skills to implement the duty in their work.
- Gender equality issues, and their budgetary implications, are considered at the beginning of policy-making.
- It is easy to find a wide variety of data and information to assess effectively how certain actions will affect women and men.

## **How the gender equality duty fits into the broader equality picture:**

Women and men, including transsexual women and men, will experience different forms of disadvantage depending on their age, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, and whether or not they have a disability. In order to understand and address questions of gender equality under the duty, public authorities may need to consider that complexity and whether particular groups of women or men are experiencing particular disadvantages.

The gender equality duty is similar to the existing duties on race and disability equality and all three have the same spirit and intention behind them. They all require public authorities to take action to tackle discrimination, to prevent harassment, and to ensure that their work promotes equality of opportunity across all their functions. The gender equality duty has fewer requirements to set up processes than the race duty, however, in order to ensure that public authorities focus on the achievement of outcomes.

# EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN TENDRING

## Our population:

Table 1 shows that the population of England is made up of more females than males. Whilst the differential reduces slightly in the East of England, in Tendring the gap is greater with the differential being more than double that for the East of England.

Table 2 shows that there are more than double the number of men who are in economic activity, whilst it is women that are predominant in undertaking part time work. These figures are even more extreme when taken in context with the gender of residents in Tendring (see Table 1).

Table 3 shows that Tendring has a far greater % of part time jobs (as opposed to full time jobs) than the Eastern Region which itself has a greater proportion of part time jobs than Gt. Britain as a whole.

Table 4 shows the levels of weekly and hourly pay for both male and female full time workers in Tendring in comparison with both the Eastern Region and Gt. Britain. It is clear that in respect of both male and female the pay rates within Tendring are considerably lower than the national average with men earning 85% of the national average and women earning only 79% of the national average. The difference between men and women in Tendring is even higher with women only earning 74.10% of a man's average wage.

Table 1 - Gender of Residents:

		<b>Tendring</b>	<b>East of England</b>	<b>England</b>
All People	Count	138,539	538,8140	49,138,831
Males	Count	66,265	2,638,335	23,92,2144
	%	47.83	48.97	48.68
Females	Count	72,274	2,749,805	25,216,687
	%	52.17	51.03	51.32

Source National Office of Statistics 2001 Census Data

Table 2 - Economic Activity:

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Full Time</b>	<b>Part Time</b>	<b>Self Employed</b>	<b>Economically Inactive</b>
Women (Aged 16-74)	48,888	10,190 (20.84%)	10,974 (22.45%)	2,195 (4.49%)	25,529 (52.22%)
Men (Aged 16-74)	46,796	20,480 (43.76)	1,647 (3.52%)	6,700 (14.32%)	17,969 (42.67%)

Source National Office of Statistics 2001 Census Data

Table 3 - Employee Jobs 2005:

		<b>Tending %</b>	<b>Eastern Region (%)</b>	<b>Gt. Britain (%)</b>
Total employee jobs	35,900			
Full Time	22,200	61.8	66.3	67.9
Part Time	13,700	38.2	33.7	32.1

Source: Annual business inquiry employee analysis

Table 4 - Earnings by Workplace 2006:

	<b>Tending (£s)</b>	<b>Eastern Region (£s)</b>	<b>Gt. Britain (£s)</b>
Gross Weekly Pay			
Full Time Workers	368.00	443.90	448.60
Male Full Time Workers	415.40	489.40	489.40
Female Full Time Workers	307.80	374.00	387.10
Hourly Pay			
Full Time Workers	8.83	11.00	11.24
Male Full Time Workers	9.55	11.74	11.88
Female Full Time Workers	7.54	9.83	10.26

Source: Annual business inquiry employee analysis

## **Position Statement:**

The following is the Council's policy on Equality:

*“Tendring District Council recognises the diversity of its employees, customers and residents, and will seek to meet their needs and treat them fairly. This Council opposes discrimination on the basis of racial or ethnic origin, gender, disability, religious belief, colour, marital status, age, or sexual orientation. The Council intends to implement equality policies in relation to the way it manages its business, employment practices and the delivery of its services”.*

The Council has adopted the 'Equality Standard for Local Government in England'. The publication of the Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan along with the Race Equality Scheme and the Disability Equality Scheme and their respective Action Plans is a positive step towards achieving the Equality Standard. The Council will strive to:-

- Eliminate all forms of discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity among its members, staff, residents, and those organisations with which we work
- Promote community cohesion amongst all residents of Tendring

The Council will make equality central to its values by putting equality at the centre of policymaking, service delivery, regulation, enforcement, and employment practices. It will be integral to Service Plans, the Corporate Strategy and the Best Value Performance Plan. Other public and voluntary bodies will be engaged in diversity issues through the Local Strategic Partnership and our other partnerships, as well as contractual arrangements. The Council will seek to benchmark its achievements against other local authorities, utilising their examples of best practice.

The Council recognises that racial harassment, disability discrimination and other hate crime have far reaching effects on individuals, their families, local communities and residents. It violates fundamental human rights and limits the free movement and participation of some residents. It can restrict access to housing, employment, education, benefits and other services and democratic processes. The Council will take supportive action to advise and help victims of Hate Crime and harassment.

## **The Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan:**

Appendix B is the Council's action plan with detailed targets and milestones to achieve our objectives under the Gender Equality Scheme.

## Leadership and Corporate Commitment

The Council leads on equalities from the top of the organisation. Both the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive are committed to the equalities agenda and support it in every respect. Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government was achieved in March 2007, being an outcome in the Council's Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) 2006/07, and planning has already started on the achievements required to achieve Level 3. Progress towards this goal is monitored through the Authority's Management Information System. The Council will then continue to achieve levels 4 to 5 of the Standard, with the target dates being set and monitored in future BVPP's. Attached as Appendix A is a more detailed explanation of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager has been given responsibility to ensure that the Council moves forward in respect of equality issues and that equality is mainstreamed throughout the Authority.

A Service Equalities Champion Group has been established, comprising a representative (Champion) from each service. The Service Champions have direct access to the Heads of Service and attend the Management Team Meetings to drive forward and mainstream equalities. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager chairs this group.

A Members' Champion from the Cabinet has been appointed to ensure that equality is considered at the highest level.

The Council is committed to all its legislative obligations and ensures it undertakes the necessary duties to promote equality in the organisation. Tendring District Council strives to provide a good service for the benefit of our community. We acknowledge that in achieving this ambition we must be a well-managed, open and accountable Council, "*Where the customer is at the heart of all that we do*".

The Council is committed to ensuring that all local ethnic minority and diverse communities, disabled communities, and groups from other strands of equalities have access to all services and information about the Council. We work with the Tendring and Colchester Minority Ethnic Partnership, the Disability Equality Panel and the local Hate Crime Group. We also work in partnership with local agencies such as the Police, Health Service and the Fire Service to achieve this aim.

Human Resources is responsible for the monitoring of all employment related functions under the specific duties of the legislation, and to report to the Service Champions.

## Employment and Training

Equalities is an integral aspect of employment and training. It is ensured at all times that employment and training processes adhere to all equalities legislation, Codes of Practice and national guidance in all stages of recruitment and training.

The Council makes sure that the recruitment processes are fair and equitable, seeks to invite applications from the diverse communities, and aims to have a representative workforce

We already monitor our performance in respect of the following Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI):

11a The % of the top paid 5% of local authority staff who are women.

The Council also monitors the following:

- Staff In Post
- Applicants for Training
- Applicants for Promotion
- Staff who receive Training
- Staff Involved in Grievance Procedures
- Staff Involved in Disciplinary Procedures
- Staff Who Cease Employment
- Age Profile

The above data is provided on a six monthly basis and currently includes ethnic minority groups and employees with a disability. This data is provided for consideration by members of the Human Resources Committee. With effect from April 2007, this report will include details of gender.

Furthermore a number of the Council's policies are designed to promote flexible working, prevent discrimination and harassment and ensure equal opportunities for all, regardless of personal circumstances. The workforce is currently made up of 41% males and 59% females (March 2007). Tendring District Council has a duty to ensure that practices in the recruitment, retention and management of our staff do not result in one gender benefiting over another unfairly, which is why constant monitoring is a useful activity.

The Council wants to develop as an organisation and meet its aim 'to become a modern, healthy and well managed organisation'. In order to do this the environment and culture of the workplace must be free from discrimination, harassment and unequal opportunities as well as respectful of the dignity of each individual in the workplace.

### **Equal Pay:**

Tendring District Council has adopted the Local Government Single Status Job Evaluation Scheme which provides a means of establishing systematically the value of jobs within the Council. To ensure that the Council continues to have in place a fair and equitable pay structure the Job Evaluation Maintenance Policy (September 1999) should be consistently applied. This policy is available on the Human Resources intranet or from Human Resources and Customer Services.

### **Communication with Employees and Trade Unions:**

The Council regularly consults its recognised trade union, UNISON, particularly in relation to policies, procedures and achieving best practice. Employees are kept informed of Human Resources procedures and best practice via the Intranet, Staff Handbook and Human Resources Updates and Bulletins.

### **Assessing the Gender Impact of Our Employment Policies and Practice:**

Tendring District Council promotes gender equality for employees by ensuring that Human Resources procedures and processes are kept up to date with legislative changes and best practice and are designed with due regard to the needs of each gender. The Council will continue to increase the best value target to encourage more women to apply for management and other senior positions within the Council (BVPI 11a).

There will also be encouragement in the development of ways of working that take into consideration the flexibility needs of each gender.

### **Ensuring Fair Recruitment Practices Including Progression:**

Tendring District Council will endeavour to make all recruitment practices fair, objective and to ensure the elimination of discrimination.

The Council will ensure that all staff involved in recruitment are offered training in equal opportunities and that there is more scope for flexible working within the organisation.

### **Work Based training Opportunities:**

It is essential that both male and female staff including transsexual staff have access to work based training opportunities. Some groups of workers e.g. those with caring responsibilities, may find it harder to take up training opportunities. Therefore, wherever possible, training should be carried out within the Council on a variety of days so that staff who only work certain days of the week or at certain times during the day can take part.

## **Promoting and Managing Flexible Working:**

Far more women than men work on a part time basis (Twenty-First Century Dad, Equal Opportunities Commission 2006) due to their caring responsibilities, but often have to settle for low paid work with poor prospects for training and development opportunities. The lack of good quality part time work and development opportunities is a major concern of the gender pay gap within the public sector. Tendring District Council has a number of policies in place to support and encourage flexible working, including:

- Flexible Working Hours Scheme
- Job Share Policy
- Parental Leave and Time Off for Dependents Guidance

These policies can be found on the Council's intranet or copies can be obtained from Human Resources and Customer Services.

Other positive steps that must be taken include the following:

- Whenever a vacancy arises managers should consider whether a post can be opened up to people who want to work on a part time basis or job share basis.
- Managers should not insist that people wanting to job share have to find their own job share partner.
- Accommodate requests wherever possible for part time work for women returning from maternity leave
- Increase the number of opportunities to work on a part time basis at senior levels
- Make sure that all training is accessible to part time workers so that people receive the training they need to maximise their potential

## **Eliminating Harassment and Discrimination:**

Tackling harassment is essential in terms of the gender equality scheme. Harassment on the grounds of sex can have a serious impact on the physical and mental well being of victims. Tendring District Council deplores all forms of harassment at work and aims to eradicate all forms of harassment from the workplace.

The Council has a separate Harassment Policy that can be accessed via the Intranet or from Human Resources and Customer Services.

## **Managing Pregnancy and Return from Maternity Leave:**

Discrimination against pregnant workers and women returning to work after maternity leave is widespread in Britain. Currently 45% of pregnant women experience disadvantageous treatment at work.

Tackling discrimination against pregnant workers and those returning from maternity leave is thus a vital element of eliminating unlawful discrimination. Tendring District Council supports the following steps to make the culture of the organisation a positive one for pregnant staff and those returning from maternity leave:

- Ensuring that all pregnant workers are consulted on their health and safety needs and receive a written risk assessment
- Keeping in touch with women on maternity leave and informing them of any vacancies or training opportunities
- Planning in advance of periods of maternity leave e.g. by upgrading the skills of other staff to cover duties
- Making the transition back to work after maternity leave as smooth as possible

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Maternity Policy, which gives further guidance on maternity rights and benefits. A copy of this policy can be found on the Intranet or from Human Resources and Customer Services.

### **Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures:**

All employees of Tendring District Council and Human Resources and Customer Services must ensure that there is no gender bias operating within the grievance and disciplinary procedures, including towards transsexual staff.

### **Redundancy:**

If a redundancy situation arises within Tendring District Council an assessment will take place of the impact of this on both male and female staff, including part timers, those on maternity leave, and transsexual staff. If it is found that any programme of redundancies disproportionately affects either men or women, or transsexual staff, then the strategy will be re-assessed to ensure compliance with the gender duty.

## Gender Equality Objectives

Based on the proportional impact that gender has on the specific services we provide and our role as an employer, the Council's gender equality objectives demonstrates its commitment to the implementation of this Scheme. They are driven by the focus on positive outcomes that are aligned with our key strategic priorities.

### **Objective 1: We will promote gender equality for employees and customers by:**

- Ensuring that our policies and practices are designed with due regard to the needs of each gender
- Continuing to increase our best value targets to encourage more women to apply for management and other senior positions within the Council

- Encouraging flexible ways of working that take into consideration the flexibility needs of each gender
- Removing any unlawful barriers experienced by either gender when accessing the information and services we provide.

**Objective 2: We will tackle discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender by:**

- Encouraging positive attitudes about the equal capabilities of both genders
- Challenging discriminatory attitudes and behaviour about gender and taking action where necessary
- Ensuring that our policies for dealing with discrimination and harassment mirror best practice examples
- Continuing to educate and train our staff to have respect for people as individuals.

**Objective 3: We will gain an improved understanding of our employee and customer needs in relation to their gender by:**

- Assessing how data already held by the Council relating to employees and customers can be more effectively utilised when developing strategies for improved service delivery
- Identifying gaps in the data already held and devising appropriate means to obtain this information where it would be of benefit to the service and/or employee
- Implementing gender-related actions identified during the equality impact assessment process
- Evaluating and measuring employee and customer satisfaction in terms of their experience of the Council as an employer and service provider.

## Gender Equality Scheme - Availability

This public document is accessible to anyone who wishes to see it on our website at <http://www.tendringdc.gov.uk> , along with further information on our equalities agenda.

Alternatively we can arrange to provide this in hard copy format or on disk. If you would like it in either of these formats please contact the Community Operations Manager (see contact details below).

## Your Feedback and Comments Matter

The Council is interested in hearing from you whether you have a compliment, a complaint, or would like to express your comments or views on any aspect of this Gender Equality Scheme. You may contact us in the following ways:

Email: [equality&diversity@tendringdc.gov.uk](mailto:equality&diversity@tendringdc.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01255 686360

Write to: Community Operations Manager  
Tendring District Council  
86 Station Road  
Clacton on Sea  
Essex  
CO15 1SP

## Alternative Languages and Formats

The Council offers interpretation facilities in a variety of languages. If you, a member of your family or a friend would like assistance in reading this document in an alternative language or format, please do not hesitate to contact the Community Operations Manager as shown above.

## Equality Standard for Local Government

The Standard is arranged as a series of levels, presented as Levels 1-5. The levels are intended to be used as a guide, and the expectation is that targets relating to Level 1 should be achieved before moving on to Levels 2, then 3 and beyond.

The Equality Standard sets out a way of working within local authorities that makes mainstreaming equalities into service delivery and employment an issue for all aspects of the local authority's work. Working through this Standard identifies the disadvantages associated with age, disability, gender, race, religion/faith and sexuality and works to remove barriers that create the disadvantage. The Equality Standard is a means to combat the institutional processes that lead to discrimination which form part of the culture, administration and governance in the organisations and communities in Britain and the world.

There are four specific areas of activity and development, the Council is required to meet which are:

1. - *Leadership and corporate commitment.*
2. - *Consultation and community development and scrutiny.*
3. - *Service delivery and customer care.*
4. - *Employment and training.*

Five levels of achievement are possible, and each level is an essential foundation for the next. The five levels of achievement and outcome are based around the following five key ideals:

1. - *Establishing a comprehensive equalities policy.*
2. - *Setting equalities objectives and targets.*
3. - *Information systems and monitoring against targets.*
4. - *Measuring progress against targets.*
5. - *Achieving and reviewing outcomes.*

It is a continuous process that needs to be kept under constant review to ensure that the required standards are maintained.

## Gender Equality Scheme - Action Plan 2007 – 2010

LEADERSHIP AND CORPORATE COMMITMENT			
ACTION	OUTCOME	DATE FOR COMPLETION	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
Review Gender Equalities Scheme Annually	A Scheme that reflects the aims and objectives of the Council in addressing equality across the district and ensuring services are inclusive not exclusive.	March 2008	Overview & Scrutiny Manager/ Com Ops Manager
Equality Champions Group to meet on a monthly basis	Regular meetings to provide a corporate forum to deal with equality issues, feed items into Heads of Service and provide a mechanism for resolving problems and sharing learning.	From April 2006	Overview & Scrutiny Manager
Equality Impact Assessments to be produced for any new policies and procedures either written or verbal	Services consider the impact of equality on all new policies and procedures and ensure that the proposals are not prejudicial to minority groups, or unreasonably restrictive to certain areas of the community.	Ongoing Review: July 2007	Service Champions
Review and Update Equality Impact Assessments	Services remain alert to the impact of policies and procedures on the community and ensure that actions are taken if necessary to remove any discrimination or prejudice.	Ongoing Review: July 2007	Service Champions
Ensure mechanisms for responding to harassment on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment and sexuality (including disability and race) are in place.	To allow full investigation of any harassment claims and to develop a clear picture of where they are occurring so any suspected prejudice can be investigated.	July 2007	Assistant Head of Human Resources
Ensure the implications in committee reports on “equality and diversity” are realistic and thorough and address gender issues	To reflect the growing importance of equality and diversity issues in local government and ensure that services are giving serious consideration to all equality and diversity issues, including gender.	Ongoing Review: November 2007	Heads of Service

## CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ACTION	OUTCOME	DATE FOR COMPLETION	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
Consult with community, staff, trade unions and stakeholder groups on policy and delivery.	To gather information to ensure actions taken by the Council reflect the needs of the community and address the issues of the minority groups.	Ongoing Review: September 2007	Heads of Service
Gather more timely data on the gender make up of the community	To be able to plan service provision to match the needs of the district.	November 2007	Executive Officer
Review procedures to respond to claims of discrimination and harassment	To have in place a recognised system that will correctly deal with any claims in a fair and equitable way.	July 2007	Assistant Head of Human Resources

## SERVICE DELIVERY AND CUSTOMER CARE

ACTION	OUTCOME	DATE FOR COMPLETION	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
All services to incorporate equality impact assessment as an action in 2007/08 Service Plans	To clearly inform all members of staff the expectation that the Council has in ensuring services are provided to the whole community and are not discriminatory.	June 2007	Heads of Service
All services to develop service-level equality objectives and targets	To mainstream Equality and Diversity throughout the authority and build it into being part of all officers' day job.	June 2007	Heads of Service
All services to incorporate actions from Equality Impact Assessment in Service Plans for 2007/08	To ensure a joined up approach to addressing any inequalities within the Council.	April 2007	Heads of Service & Service Champions
Ensure that the needs of transsexual and transgender people are fully understood by staff especially those in a communal setting such as leisure centres	The needs of transsexual and transgender people will be fully integrated into the awareness of staff and prevent intentional or unintentional discrimination	Ongoing	Assistant Head of Human Resources and Heads of Service
Work in partnership with local groups and the Hate Crime Panel to reduce instances of Hate Crime through gender, race or disability.	Improved partnership working will assist in developing more effective services and support people who suffer hate crime.	Ongoing	Community Safety Team



## EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

ACTION	OUTCOME	DATE FOR COMPLETION	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
Ensure recruitment, employment and pay policies and practices are non-discriminatory and are free from gender bias	To be a good employer that actively works to ensure that the Council attracts people to work for it from all minority groups.	Ongoing	Assistant Head of Human Resources
Where operationally possible encourage and promote wider use of flexible working practices throughout the authority	To be confident that nobody is disadvantaged when seeking employment with Tendring District Council.	Ongoing	Assistant Head of Human Resources
When considering requests for flexible working take into account gender requirements and monitor such requests to ensure the process is free from discrimination.	Implementation of flexible working practices that do not discriminate on the grounds of gender and allow staff to see that the process is open and transparent.	Ongoing	Assistant Head of Human Resources
Training in Equality awareness to be rolled out to all staff and members.	To ensure those charged with Equality and Diversity issues as service providers or in leadership roles have a clear understanding of their duty.	May 2007	Assistant Head of Human Resources
Update all relevant policies to include the changes set out in the Work and Families Act 2006.	Services working to policies that are up-to-date.	July 2007	Assistant Head of Human Resources
Continue to increase and meet targets for BVPI 11a every year.	More women in senior roles (top 5% of the organisation).	Ongoing	Assistant Head of Human Resources
Monitor attendance of employees on training courses by their gender to ensure that ratios reflect the general workforce gender profile.	The Council able to identify any inequalities between genders in terms of access to training and development.	December 2007	Assistant Head of Human Resources
Encourage both male and female employees to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and monitor participation according to employee gender.	Participation in the LGPS reflects the gender profile of the Council.	March 2008	Assistant Head of Human Resources
Update the Equalities Policy to ensure that this adequately supports and values transsexual and transgender employees and their needs.	Provision of a fair and equal working environment that respects the dignity of individuals.	August 2007	Assistant Head of Human Resources