



**ABERDEEN**  
**CITY COUNCIL**

# **DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY POLICY**

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## **Section 1: Policy statement**

### **Our vision**

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#### **Vision Statement**

**We are committed to adhering to the General Duty on public authorities contained in the Equality Act 2010. This is to have due regard when carrying out public functions to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with regard to eight of the nine protected characteristics detailed in the Act - Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation. For Marriage and Civil Partnerships the duty is to eliminate unlawful discrimination only. This applies to the Council as an employer, service provider and in relation to any partnership working as well as in our public duties. We are also committed to adhering to the Specific Duties on public authorities as set by Scottish Ministers to enable the better performance of the General Duty.**

**We will create a culture that values all the differences that employees and communities bring, and which values openness, fairness, transparency and reward and recognition based on ability and achievement only.**

**We will continually strive to maintain an environment in which people from all backgrounds can live and work together harmoniously by challenging unlawful or unfair discrimination, prejudice, stereotyping, harassment and undignified and disrespectful behaviour.**

**We want everyone in Aberdeen to have an equal opportunity to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation, including those who experience poverty and social disadvantage.**

Our vision will enable us to meet our legal obligation to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to deliver higher quality and more responsive services. It is also consistent with the vision set out in Aberdeen's Community Plan for the people of Aberdeen and reflects our commitment under Aberdeen's Single Outcome Agreement.

#### **How we will achieve our vision**

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When managing diversity and providing real equality of opportunity, we will:

- comply with the Equality Act 2010 and follow associated codes of practice
- tackle unlawful discrimination throughout the organisation and use our position of influence in the city, wherever possible, to help overcome discriminatory barriers. This includes eliminating discrimination on the grounds of **age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnerships, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation** or

any other irrelevant factor, including trade union membership and poverty and social disadvantage

- work with our partners in Community Planning Aberdeen, the public, private and voluntary/third sectors to progress diversity and equality of opportunity across the city
- support and celebrate cultural diversity
- share a commitment to social justice
- recognise that managing diversity and equality is the key to good and positive people management, effective employee engagement and an integral part of achieving organisational goals. We will therefore seek to exceed minimum legal requirements of fair treatment to meet these goals
- adopt fair and merit based policies and practices by being an organisation which demonstrates excellence in relation to the diverse customers and communities we serve
- whilst ensuring that we provide equality of opportunity where everyone is given a chance to contribute and compete on equal terms, we will recognize that everyone is unique and as such will, from time to time, need to be treated in different ways that are fair and tailored to their individual needs
- promote and encourage valuing individualism and individual needs and talents as a means of managing and developing a talented workforce to meet organisational goals and deliver diverse customer needs more efficiently and effectively
- ensure that all employees have the opportunity to maximise their potential and enhance their self development and their contribution to the organisation
- make managing diversity and equality a mainstream issue, owned by all employees and councillors, so that it influences all employment policies and working practices
- offer services fairly to all people, ensuring that anyone in contact with the Council is treated with respect. This includes making provision for those groups within the community whose needs and expectations are less well met
- encourage disadvantaged groups and individuals to participate in the community
- actively promote good relations between people from different communities
- make this policy known to all Elected Members and employees (so that they are clear about their responsibilities within and out with the workplace), the locally recognised trades unions, job applicants, local citizens and partner organisations

- operate procurement practices and partnership arrangements that ensure others commissioned to provide services for the Council have similar policies that cover diversity and equality

## ***Section 2: Leadership commitment***

This policy is actively supported by the Chief Executive, the Corporate Management Team and all Elected Members who are committed to achieving service excellence through creating an open culture. This culture values the differences that employees and communities bring, and in which all individuals feel respected and included.

All members of the Corporate Management Team will promote this policy and ensure equality of access and treatment in employment and access to service delivery.

## ***Section 3: Scope***

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

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The policy applies to **all** employees and workers (including agency workers); Councillors; clients; suppliers and contractors. The policy applies to all processes relating to recruitment, employment, training and development and nurturing of talent. It also applies to any dealings we have with customers and clients. Decisions relating to customers and clients will be based on business-related criteria only.

We will make sure all Councillors, employees, clients, communities, suppliers and contractors are aware of our Diversity and Equality Policy.

All employees have a responsibility to promote this policy and this is one of the core organisational behaviours that our employees are required to meet. Behaviour, actions or words that are not in the spirit of the policy will not be tolerated and will be treated as misconduct and dealt with in line with our Managing Discipline policy and procedure.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, Aberdeen City Council for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence and may be ordered to pay compensation to the victim.

## ***Section 4: How this policy helps us to meet our legal obligations***

By embedding diversity and equality in our organisational culture and values, this policy not only meets but goes beyond our legal responsibilities explained below.

As a public body the Council has legal duties relating to the protected characteristics detailed in the Equality Act 2010. How we will deliver our duties to advance equality of opportunity is currently set out in our Single Equality Scheme 2009-2012 (to be replaced by Equality Outcomes, meeting the new legislative requirements).

We will engage with Elected Members, Directors, partners and communities to set out our Equality Outcomes. We will develop an action plan to ensure the delivery of these Equality Outcomes and pay due regard to the general duty for equality as we provide our council services.

## **Our approach to employment and service provision**

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It is unlawful to discriminate **directly** or **indirectly** when

- **recruiting, selecting and employing people**
- **providing goods, facilities or services to customers**

on the grounds of the following protected characteristics:

**age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnerships, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation** or any other irrelevant factor, including trade union membership and social deprivation

Bullying and harassment can amount to unlawful discrimination and our policy covering the management of bullying and harassment, which supplements this policy, sets out our commitment to create a work environment free of bullying and harassment, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

The different types of unlawful discrimination are explained in **Section 8**.

We will respond seriously to and investigate complaints of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation.

This policy means that we can ensure that we all behave in a way that is more outcome-driven and which recognises that everyone is different, with different needs. We will ensure that our services, policies and practices take account of peoples' different needs and experiences. We recognise that together we can make a significant difference to the quality of services we provide and to the quality of peoples' lives.

Where appropriate, we aim to provide personalised and tailored services, targeting scarce resources to those who need them most. We will provide information about services that is clear, accurate and accessible to all and will treat all customers positively. We will conduct Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments to assess the impact of the Council's policies, procedures and functions on the diverse groups within Aberdeen. This will ensure the Council meets the commitments set out in its Single Equality Scheme and works towards developing and achieving its Equality Outcomes to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments, where required, will be presented with committee reports, either as a summary or as an appendix to the report, so that elected members are aware of the diversity and equality implications of recommendations when they make decisions. Service plans will be diversity and equality proofed to ensure that actions to promote diversity and equality are visible at a front-line operational level and officers are encouraged to think “diversity and equality” at all times.

## **Our approach to procurement**

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We aim to ensure that all services provided by, or on behalf of, the Council are made available to all individuals and groups equally and without discrimination. Also, to ensure that, within the limits of the law, all individuals, companies or organisations undertaking work, or providing goods or services, for the Council do not follow discriminatory practices.

Procurement can play a part in promoting equality in two main areas:

- tendering for goods and services provided under contract agreement
- contractors’ equality/diversity policies and practices

We will encourage contractors to have in place policies, which will assist them to avoid unlawful discrimination. Similarly, we will encourage contractors to implement these policies, so as to promote equal opportunities. Contractors will adhere to Aberdeen City Council policies, in particular where the contractor or its employees require to be on Council premises.

## **Our approach to Partnerships**

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Aberdeen City Council, as the facilitator of the Community Planning process and Single Outcome Agreement, has a key leadership role to encourage equal opportunities and to observe legal requirements. We also have a duty to report on behalf of Community Planning Aberdeen, the community planning partnership, on the actions that have been taken to meet these duties.

We have launched a new Equality and Inclusion Group to report to Community Planning Aberdeen and to integrate horizontally with the 5 Themed Groups – Cleaner and Greener, Healthier, Safer and Stronger, Smarter and Wealthier and Fairer. This will bring together senior officers and partners to ensure that the different needs of the groups with protected characteristics are taken into consideration when making plans, developing policies and delivering services to the citizens of Aberdeen. The Equality and Inclusion Group is proactive in working with the other themed groups, particularly around Health, Housing, Community Safety and Learning to ensure that diversity and equality is mainstreamed throughout community planning. We will publicise our Diversity and Equality Policy widely and positively.

## **Our approach to Communities**

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We will consider the different and proportionate impact of the Council's decisions on the groups with protected characteristics and communities of interest, listening to feedback from citizens about the services we deliver and the effects of our plans. We will encourage Aberdeen's diverse community to be involved in decision making and developing services.

The protected characteristic groups and communities of interest groups include:

- Younger people and older people
- People with disabilities including those with learning difficulties or mental health problems
- Women and men
- People who propose to, start or have completed a process (or part of a process) to change his or her sex. The Equality Act does not require a person to be under medical supervision to be protected.
- Those in civil partnerships
- Ethnic minority people including Gypsy/Travellers and refugees
- People of different religions or beliefs, or none
- Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals (LGB)
- People experiencing poverty and social disadvantage

We will provide support and resources to citywide communities of interest forums and neighbourhood groups representing these characteristics using the Council's Protocol for Community Engagement to involve these groups and members of the community in planning for our future.

We will ensure that barriers to participation are addressed, for example, enabling disabled access, providing sign language support or other interpretation or translation, and by providing a crèche or childcare support.

When we engage with or consult citizens, communities and people who use our services we will take positive action to involve all sections of the population of Aberdeen.

## ***Section 5: Managing diversity and equality in practice***

Diversity and equality are at the heart of the way in which we manage, support and develop our employees and deliver services to our citizens. This section describes a range of actions we will take to foster our commitment to diversity management, and ensure that a diversity and equality culture is embedded within our attitudes and behaviour.

## **How we will measure, review and reinforce our practice**

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To test the effectiveness of our Diversity and Equality Policy, we will regularly

- review our policies, procedures and functions by carrying out Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments
- listen to our communities and involve them in planning, implementing and reviewing our equality outcomes
- collate and analyse our workforce composition data
- undertake customer equality monitoring where appropriate, gathering and analysing data on protected characteristics. Monitoring will assist us to identify, explore and address issues of under-representation and/ or disadvantage linked to these protected characteristics.
- benchmark data and good practice by comparing the diversity and equality approaches of other organisations and adopt and adapt relevant ideas where appropriate
- network with others, both inside and outside the Council, to keep up to date with ways of progressing diversity and equality and to share learning
- obtain feedback from stakeholders, employees, the locally recognised trades unions and clients and analyse the data received
- monitor and analyse job application data and recruitment decisions
- ask a random sample of job applicants to give feedback on their experience of our recruitment and selection processes
- analyse exit interview data
- monitor and report on employment data for the specific duties set by the Scottish Government as part of the Equality Act 2010
- monitor complaints made under the Council's policy on the management of bullying and harassment at work
- raise awareness and promote the use of the Prejudice Incident Reporting Form
- encourage services to adopt appropriate measures to address prejudice incidents

## **How we will train people and raise awareness**

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To increase awareness and encourage an understanding of why valuing people as individuals is important, we will:

- include diversity and equality issues in our induction programmes

- include diversity and equality objectives in our schemes for reviewing performance so that employees understand the standards they must meet and so that any related training needs are identified
- consult key stakeholders on what the Council can learn in relation to diversity and equality matters
- integrate diversity and equality into mainstream training and development programmes
- provide on-line training courses on equality and diversity aimed at both managers and employees
- provide and promote education programmes for all employees (including programmes that move from awareness to behavioural change)
- integrate behaviours that support diversity and equality into development programmes and assessment and selection processes
- run briefing sessions and hold events to raise awareness for elected members, Community Councillors, voluntary groups and the public
- deliver training to Elected Members and officers on Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments

## **How we will communicate**

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To develop a culture of two-way communication, we will:

- continue to promote and use plain English in our written publications
- establish a variety of communication channels to address the different needs of the organisation
- continually seek feedback from our stakeholders and make changes as a result
- use different communication methods, including providing interpreting and translation services, to help people keep up to date with key issues affecting the organisation and their employment
- ensure that communication imagery and graphics are accessible and inclusive and are not discriminatory or offensive, reflecting and reinforcing the content of documents

## **How we will recruit people**

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Recognising that managing diversity and equality creates a wider recruitment pool that increases our chances of getting the right person for the job, we will:

- only include requirements and standards in job profiles that are necessary for effective job performance

- objectively assess job applicants only against the job requirements, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability
- monitor and analyse applicant data and recruitment decisions, and consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems which may be identified as a result of this analysis
- ensure that merit and competence are the basis for all recruitment and selection decisions
- produce guidelines for recruiters to help ensure that diversity and equality requirements and best practice feature prominently at each stage of the recruitment and selection process
- engage with partners in programmes and initiatives and use a more focused approach to advertising and recruitment to target the more marginalised and hard to reach communities

### **How we will ensure our working practices reflect this policy**

Recognising that managing diversity and equality is an essential element of employment engagement and motivation, we will;

- consider any possible direct or indirect discrimination in our standard working practices
- put in place mechanisms to ensure that everyone who is carrying out work of equal value is paid equally
- carry out a pay and conditions audit every 3 years and supplement this with random equality checks on pay and grading
- produce and publish annual employee monitoring data
- address work-life balance challenges in ways that take account of the needs of the organisation and employees and offer suitable choices and options where they can be accommodated, We will strongly oppose victimisation or unfair treatment of employees who work under flexible working arrangements or request to work more flexibly
- make reasonable adjustments to our standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability
- ensure that the criteria included in our job profiles describe the behaviours for positive commitment to this policy
- have in place mechanisms to deal with all forms of harassment, bullying, and intimidating behaviour

## ***Section 6: Dealing with complaints***

We will take any complaint of discrimination, harassment or victimisation seriously. We will deal with complaints in line with the relevant procedure, namely:

- our recruitment complaints procedure if someone applying for a job feels that they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against (details available in the guidance we issue to all applicants)
- our policy on managing bullying and harassment at work (details available in the local conditions of service on the Council's intranet or from line managers)
- our corporate complaints procedure if the complaint is about the way we are providing services (details available on our website)
- our Prejudice Incident Reporting Form process to monitor and record prejudice incidents

Each of these procedures clearly sets out how complaints should be made.

## ***Section 7: Monitoring and reviewing the policy***

The policy will be monitored in respect of the Council's statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010. In accordance with the duties applying to public bodies under the Act, there is a requirement to identify Equality Outcomes (replacing the Single Equality Scheme). Analysis of our achievement against the identified Equality Outcomes will be a significant indicator of our compliance with the objectives under this policy.

The Human Resources and Organisational Development service and Customer Service and Performance will review this policy every 3 years. It will, nevertheless, be subject to continual review and amendment in light of experience of its operation, best practice and statutory requirements. Changes will only be made following normal consultation arrangements.

## ***Section 8: Glossary of Terms***

**Community Planning** is about

- Making sure people and communities are genuinely engaged in the decisions made on public services which affect them; allied to
- A commitment from organisations to work together, not apart, in providing better public services.

Community Planning in Aberdeen City moved to its next stage of development after a thorough **review** of the Community Planning Partnership and the overall structure was undertaken in 2010.

As a result, from June 2011, a new Community Planning Partnership was established - **Community Planning Aberdeen** and a new Board, **Community Planning Aberdeen Board**. The Aberdeen City Alliance has therefore ceased.

Community Planning Aberdeen is adapting the Scottish Government's **Priorities/Themes**\* and has set up 5 new themed Groups around:

- Greener
- Healthier
- Safer and Stronger
- Smarter
- Wealthier and Fairer

**\* Please Note: These Themed Groups, replaced Challenge Forums in June 2011 to take responsibility for the action required within the City to deliver the outcomes for the 5 themes.**

**Direct discrimination** occurs when a person is treated less favourably than other people on the grounds of personal attributes such as gender, race, disability, religion or age.

**Diversity** is about recognising our similarities and differences, and aims to develop and support organisations where people feel welcome, and are respected and included, regardless of their background.

**Equality Act 2010** - replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single act to make the law simpler and to remove inconsistencies. This makes the law easier for people to understand and comply with. The act also strengthened protection in some situations.

The act covers nine protected characteristics, which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly. Every person has one or more of the protected characteristics, so the act protects everyone against unfair treatment. The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The Equality Act sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone, such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person.

The act prohibits unfair treatment in the workplace, when providing goods, facilities and services, when exercising public functions, in the disposal and management of premises, in education and by associations (such as private clubs).

**Equality, or equal opportunities**, is defined in the Scotland Act 1998 as the prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions.

**Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment** helps an organisation to assess the impact of policies, procedures and functions on people with protected characteristics and ensures that commitments set out in a Single Equality Scheme and under Equality Outcomes are met. It also helps to promote equality and good community relations.

**Equality Outcomes** – public authorities are to set equality outcomes, based on evidence and informed by the involvement of equality groups, which will reflect the results intended to be achieved.

**Failure to make reasonable adjustments** is where an individual is disadvantaged because of a disability and reasonable adjustments are not made to overcome the disadvantage.

**Gender Reassignment** includes a person who intends to undergo, is undergoing or has in the past undergone a process to change his/her sex. The Equality Act does not require a person to be under medical supervision to be protected.

**Harassment** occurs when there is unwanted conduct related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, nationality or any other personal characteristic which has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. If it is reasonably considered by that person to have the above effect, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct, then it will be considered harassment. Bullying is a form of harassment.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs when a requirement or condition is applied which is such that it would be to the detriment of a considerably larger proportion of the relevant group to which the individual belongs than to others, which is not objectively justifiable and which is to the individual's detriment.

**Mainstreaming** – 'Mainstreaming' equality is essentially concerned with the integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the every day work of Government and other public bodies from the outset. It puts people, and their diverse needs and experiences, at the heart of policy-making.

**Sex (Gender)** is our normal understanding of men and women.

**Single Equality Scheme** - The Scheme and its accompanying action plan builds on the wide range of work carried out by Council services to promote diversity and equality. The Scheme sets out how we will fulfil our duties in terms of equality legislation. The Council's Single Equality Scheme is on the Council's website.

**Single Outcome Agreement** - The 'national outcomes' agreed between national and local government in the Concordat address the improvements sought across Scotland as a whole in quality of life, opportunities in life and living context. Each local authority reaches a Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) with the Scottish Government. The SOA covers all local government services in each local authority area as well as a significant range of the responsibilities of Community Planning partnerships where local authorities have a significant part to play.

**Unlawful discrimination** - In general terms, individuals are protected from discrimination both while applying for a job, during their employment, and after the relationship ends (for example when providing a verbal or written reference). The law also protects people against discrimination or harassment on the basis of their membership or non-membership of a trade union.

**Victimisation** is where someone is treated less favourably than others because:

- he/she has alleged unlawful discrimination
- he/she supported someone to make a complaint
- he/she gave evidence in relation to a complaint



## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

### Policy on Faith, Religion, Belief and Non-belief (Spirituality)

#### **1. Policy Statement**

This policy details the Council's stance in relation to employment matters concerning faith, religion, belief and non-belief. It is emphasised that the Council, as an organisation, does not have any particular spiritual or religious affiliation, nor does it endorse any particular denomination or religious faith. It does, however, recognise the commitment individual employees may have to spiritual or religious practice and will therefore actively support their right to do so in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect. It also further recognises that there are a variety of obligations placed upon those following particular religious or faith traditions which may impact on their working lives.

Where practicable, the Council will seek to accommodate employees who are required to follow essential religious observances in accordance with the contents of the Equality Act 2010 Code of Practice. However, the Council can only support employees in their spiritual or religious practice to a degree where measures do not compromise operational requirements of the organisation and where it is reasonably practicable to put in place arrangements, taking account the impact on service delivery, cost and the needs of other employees.

#### **2. Scope**

This policy and procedure applies to all employees and workers of the Council.

#### **3. Issues to be considered**

##### **Items of Clothing or Accessories**

The Council does not operate a dress code. The wearing of items of clothing or accessories in accordance with particular spiritual, religious or faith traditions and associated cultural practices will be recognised as acceptable. However, in order to comply with health and safety requirements or other similar legislation, specific items of clothing or accessories may be prohibited. Line managers will inform employees at the outset if this is the case. Also, if in the unusual circumstance, the items of clothing or accessories are in conflict with another employee's religious beliefs, the issue would be referred to the line manager with the aim of finding a solution.

##### **Requests for Leave for Religious Occasions**

The Council will seek to accommodate requests for annual leave for a religious occasion or to visit family overseas provided the employee has

sufficient holiday due to them and it is reasonable for them to be absent from work during the period requested.

It is recognised that many religions or beliefs have special periods of religious observance, festivals or holidays. We are aware that some of these occasions are aligned with lunar phases. As a result, dates can change from year to year and may not become clear until closer to the actual date. However, where practicable, employees should provide as much notice as possible to their line manager if the request is for a significant period of annual leave.

### **Quiet Space for Prayer**

The Council is aware that some religions or beliefs require individuals to pray at specific times during working time and that employees may request access to an appropriate quiet place (or prayer room) to undertake their religious observance.

Although employers are not legally required to provide a quiet room, the Council will endeavour, where practicable, to provide a quiet space in its various workplaces for use for prayer and contemplation where this is requested by an employee. In deciding whether this is practicable, consideration will be given as to whether a suitable room is available and to the needs of other employees who may have a need for a rest room. The Council will consult with relevant employee representatives (including trade unions) within the workplace before any decision was made on designating a room or space for prayer and contemplation and to discuss any rules in respect of its use. Consideration would also be given to providing separate storage facilities for ceremonial objects.

### **Dietary Requirements and Fasting**

It is recognised that some religions or beliefs have specific dietary requirements. If an employee with such needs brings food into the workplace, they may need to store and heat it separately from other food. The Council will consult relevant employee representatives (including trade unions) on such issues where they arise to attempt to find a mutually acceptable way of accommodating such requirements.

We are aware that some religions require extended periods of fasting. The Council will give consideration to supporting employees through a fasting period. However, consideration will also require to be given to other employees to ensure that extra work burdens are not placed on them.

### **Washing Facilities**

It is recognised that certain religions require people to wash before prayer, which can be done using normal washing facilities. Where an employee requests this, the Council will endeavour to ensure that other relevant employees understand the religion or belief-related observances of their colleagues, to avoid any misunderstandings.

## **Breaks**

It is recognised that certain religions have differing prayer needs and as a result requests may be made by certain employees for additional or different breaks. Requests for additional breaks for prayer will be given consideration, however, operational requirements would take precedence and any additional time given over and above normal break times would be either unpaid or the time would require to be made up at a later point. Consideration would also be given to the varying of the times that breaks are taken to accommodate prayer but again this would be subject to operational needs. The impact the above might have on other employees would also require to be taken into consideration before any alternative arrangement was granted and put in place.

## **4. Chaplaincy Service**

The Council has available a chaplaincy service for employees to use which is available to those of any faith or religion. The Chaplain can provide support to any employee with a problem or issue that they may wish to discuss in confidence. The Council Chaplain can be contacted on mobile telephone number 07834 198801 or through the Council Chaplain page on the Zone.

## **5. Harassment on Grounds of Faith, Religion or Belief**

Harassment or bullying on grounds of faith, religion, belief and non-belief will not be tolerated and any complaints of alleged harassment will be investigated under the Managing and Preventing Harassment at Work policy, except where the issue relates to a conflict between employees/workers in relation to their faith, religion and/or beliefs. Where this has been considered by a manager and following legal/HR advice a decision has been made to support an individual or group, the other individual or group will need to use the grievance procedure should they wish to challenge the decision.

All employees have the right to practice a religion or belief. However, beliefs promoted in a way that impinges on the rights and freedoms of other employees or workers will not be permitted. Also, the wearing of slogans or symbols which express negative or hostile messages or which may constitute harassment again will not be permitted.

## **6. Review of the policy**

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Service will review this policy every 3 years. It will, nevertheless, be subject to continual review and amendment in light of experience of its operation, employment best practice and statutory requirements. Changes will only be made following normal consultation arrangements.