

Equality and Diversity in Employment April 2021 – March 2023

Introduction

Our Corporate Plan 2022 – 2027 sets out a vision for Perth and Kinross where everyone can live life well, free from poverty and inequality. It outlines seven key priorities with equality and inclusion threaded through each one and our Equality Mainstreaming Report identified as key to delivering several of the priorities. We also emphasis our commitment to better engage with people and communities, ensuring they have a voice through our key priority to work in partnership with our communities.

As an employer we support our employees to contribute to the achievement of our Corporate Plan objectives and to develop an environment where our activity is driven by our Values and the behaviours associated with them.

Our obligations as an employer and service provider are set out in the Equality Act 2010. The general duty of the Act require us to :

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Foster good relations between people from different groups - this involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups.

We have equality specific policies which are focused on achieving these objectives like our Corporate Equalities Policy and the Equal Pay Policy. We also have our Equality and Fairness Impact Assessment tool to ensure that all of our employment policies work towards these goals by considering the impact of a policy on specific groups of people. This assessment is focused around the legally protected characteristics established in the Equality Act but also expands these to consider the impact on groups such as armed forces veterans and unpaid Carers. We have also been specific in our Mainstreaming Report about actions relating to our work as an employer thereby providing a focus and means of measuring progress.

This report considers activity across all aspects of the employment lifecycle including recruitment and will include :

1. Our Progress - an update on progress towards the achievement of the employment related actions in the Equalities Action Plan 2021-25 included in our Mainstreaming Report
2. Our Data - key data relating to the key findings of our Equal Pay Audits from 2022 and 2023 and recent recruitment activity
3. Our Plans - examples of how our activities and specific initiatives support diversity and inclusion in employment and our plans to continue to incorporate an equality focus into all of our employment practice. This will develop Perth and Kinross Council as a role model for other employers.

Our Progress

Our Mainstreaming Report details our equality aims both for our organisation and the wider community. There are specific employment actions which support the achievement of these.

1. Staff from equality-protected groups will be made welcome and respected in the Council workplace

- We have established organisational Values (**Ambition, Compassion and Integrity**) and an accompanying Behaviours framework which is incorporated into our day to day work and specific processes such as recruitment, induction etc..
- Our values support our efforts to further develop an inclusive working environment by encouraging discussion and engagement and sit alongside specific initiatives such as the establishment of Staff Networks which offer a voice and support to members of specific groups (LGBTI+, Disability and Race) and their allies.
- We hold a number of accreditations and have committed to specific initiatives and promote these to support awareness of our aims to provide support where required. These include :
 - Gold Award status in the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme. This reflects the work that we undertake to support existing and former members of the Armed Forces.
 - Disability Confident leader award, supporting disabled people into work through the Guaranteed Job Interview Scheme. Our Occupational Health provider continues to give advice along with relevant agencies, such as Concept Northern and Access to Work, in order that we can, where possible, reduce the barriers and make adjustments to enable our disabled employees to effectively use their talents and abilities in our workplace, thereby sustaining their employment.
 - Carer Positive accreditation which supports our ambition to be a supportive employer for those with caring responsibilities and is reflected in the provision of flexibility in working arrangements and specific carer leave.

- SeeMe is an initiative aimed at ending mental health discrimination and we continue to offer mental health first aid training and awareness raising in this area.
- We are working with Perth Autism Support (PAS) on a Workplace Equality Fund project aimed at improving the experiences of neurodiverse Perth and Kinross Council employees and recruitment candidates. We are one of only two councils in Scotland progressing this important work and PAS are working with individual service teams to establish the experiences of managers and colleagues, providing training and support for them in the workplace. They have also, with the help of our disABILITY staff network, established a group of neurodiverse employees who are contributing their lived experience to the development of supporting guidance and training material.
- We are working towards the Equally Safe at Work (ESAW) Development standard developed by Close the Gap. This supports employers to improve employment practice to advance gender equality at work and prevent violence against women. A working group attended by an Elected Member has been established and awareness raising is underway as the first step in completing our plan of activities.
- We have amended our HR system to allow employees the opportunity to use the prefix Mx thereby increasing their opportunity to reflect their gender identity.

2. People from equality protected groups are supported to access employment opportunities.

- We provide tailored support for specific groups and all the accreditations mentioned above are promoted on our [MyJobScotland site](#). In addition each page on this site includes a British Sign Language video providing information about living and working in Perth and Kinross and offers support in applying for vacancies. Our own website also provides support for applicants including a dedicated [Equality leaflet](#), advice on applying which remind applicants of our commitment to guarantee applicants an interview to candidates with a disability who meet the criteria for the advertised position and an accessible [video](#) giving advice on preparing for interview.
- We already put in place reasonable adjustments to our recruitment processes including using the Guaranteed Job Interview Scheme. The project with PAS referenced above will further support the development of our recruitment practice to ensure that it considers and adapts to the needs of neurodiverse applicants.
- Our [Employment Support Team](#) supports people with specific support needs to secure employment and employers to meet their resourcing needs. In doing so they also promote the Council as an employer. They also promote employability initiatives, and the Council takes part in these where appropriate – most recently offering work placements under the Long Term Unemployed scheme.

- We continuously monitor our recruitment performance through data and feedback from candidates and managers and use this information to adapt our processes to ensure that everyone feels that they are supported through our recruitment process.
- We continue to support our younger citizens to gain employment. We have recently been accredited as a Young Person's Guarantee employer which highlights this to young people and we continue to offer our well established [Modern Apprenticeships, Graduate Apprenticeships and Trainee programmes](#).
 - We offer Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programmes across a variety of frameworks including areas which we have identified as being difficult to recruit to. MAs are offered to young people aged 16 – 24. Achievement rates of our modern apprenticeship programme have remained high with 91.4% of young people completing the MA programme in the last financial year and achieving a positive destination, contributing to a pipeline of future talent to both the Council and the local area. In addition to Modern Apprenticeships we also offer Graduate Apprenticeships in Social Services and Healthcare and Cyber Technology and provide an opportunity for young people to achieve a degree while working.
 - For those young people who already hold a degree we have a Professional Trainee scheme which provides roles in which a young person will be supported to complete either a postgraduate qualification or a relevant technical qualification, creating a pipeline of future talent. Graduate Work Experience opportunities have also taken place in Economic Development, Energy, Transport Planning and Climate Change teams.

3. A staff learning and development programme for equality and diversity will be delivered and will be extended to partner organisations

- Our Organisational Development, Equalities and Human Resources Teams developed a programme of internal and external activity. The external opportunities were promoted widely to develop understanding and skills which will help further our inclusion agenda and, by raising awareness of these within partner organisations, will impact on the wider equality environment.
- We have developed a new e-learning module for employees to support our recruitment activity. It focuses on fair recruitment processes and provides insights and tests understanding of the issues that can arise in all stages of recruitment from writing job adverts through to interview and job offers. It is complimented by another newly developed e-learning module – Understanding Unconscious Bias.
- We have promoted a fully funded Level 2 Certificate in Equality and Diversity to our employees, offered through the Skills Network.
- We have included the development of training material, including potentially an e-learning module, in the PAS project and this will be rolled out in the coming months.

4. Our employment policies will reflect that we are a fair and inclusive employer.

- Our employment policies reflect our accreditation status and the requirements of these programmes. In addition, we have adapted our employment policy template to include a more comprehensive statement about equality and are in the process of transferring existing policies to this format.
- We are committed to the Scottish Government Fair Work Framework and are a Living Wage employer. Providing employees with an effective voice is a fundamental element of Fair Work and we work to ensure that all employees have this opportunity through established staff networks, relevant groups, focus groups and engagement events. We also issue a regular employee survey to gather employee views and use these as a key element of our employment policy development process.
- At the early stages of our employment policy development process, we use the Equality and Fairness Impact Assessment to ensure that proposals will meet our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and to identify any issues which need to be addressed prior to policies being finalised. The assessment is completed once any required changes have been made to the policy and the outcome posted on our website.

To support our efforts to effectively deliver our Mainstreaming Report commitments we continue to be active in understanding our employees and candidates through the collection and analysis of data, communicating with employees and raising awareness of our equality and inclusion work.

Data Collection

We have a mechanism in place to record protected characteristic information for each individual employee, however providing this information is voluntary and consequently the levels of information can depend upon the returns received. To understand the equality 'make up' of our workforce and the issues that are important to them is fundamental to the development of an inclusive workplace. Improved data will enable us to incorporate future positive action strategies for specific equality groups, where appropriate, within our workforce planning activity, policies etc. To achieve this the following actions were taken:

- **development of** a survey, with trade union input and relevant staff networks was issued to employees. Responses received developed the quality of workplace data, particularly as it relates to workers with the protected characteristics of **disability** and **ethnicity**,

- review of our recruitment equality data collection process which improves the quality of the data carried forward into employment records as well as allowing us to consider changes in recruitment policy and practice to support more inclusive recruitment practice.

By completing both of these actions and continuing to promote the importance of comprehensive data, we have improved the levels of employee data collected, evidenced in our workforce data information below.

Raising Awareness

There is an annual calendar of Equality Activity led by the Equalities Team and this is shared internally to increase employee awareness of the activity, its purpose and the issues relating to it. The monthly Health and Wellbeing Briefing also regularly includes references to equality-related issues, most often with a disability focus, and other health and wellbeing activities such as podcasts reference equality issues and are available to the wider community as well as employees.

Inclusive Communications

We aim to make everything we do accessible to all and are continuing to develop our internal communication through the use of different formats including subtitled videos, dedicated BSL interpreted videos and highlight options for access where possible. An example of this is our Health and Wellbeing Briefing which is produced using Sway and includes advice on the use of accessibility mode. [Guidance](#) is also available, providing colleagues with information needed to support any request for information in another language or format.

Our Data 2022 - 2023

We have noted below information about our workforce and our recruitment process. All Figures relate to those at 31 March in each year (2022 and 2023).

Employees in post

Sex

2022				2023			
Female		Male		Female		Male	
No	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
4316	73%	1607	27%	4330	73%	1579	27%

Note that, at this time, we do not hold information on other gender identities therefore the options of male and female are the only categories available at this time. We also do not offer the opportunity for employees to indicate if the gender that they identify with is different to that they were assigned at birth.

Age

	2022		2023	
Age Group	No.	%	No.	%
16-19	38	0.5	32	0.6
20-29	740	11.8	696	12.5
30-39	1221	21.1	1245	20.6
40-49	1576	26.9	1587	26.6
50-59	1773	30.1	1777	29.9
60-64	463	7.8	461	7.8
65+	112	1.9	111	1.9

We continue to have a normal distribution across the age groups with an average age of 46, however the peak falls in the 50 – 59 band indicating an older workforce with 10% of employees aged 60 or older.

Disability

2022				2023			
% Yes	% No	PNTS	% Not known	% Yes	% No	PNTS	% Not known
2	11	6	81	2	11	7	80

Although there has been a slight improvement in disclosure rates the majority of employees continue not to share their status. Male employees have a higher incidence of declaring a disability (2.3% of male employees compared to 1.8% of female employees) indicating a greater level of confidence about sharing this information.

Ethnicity

2021/22				2022/23			
% BME	% White	PNTS	% Not known	% BME	% White	PNTS	% Not Known
1	87	6	6	1	87	6	6

The ethnicity profile has remained unchanged over the two year period including the percentage of employees who have either not provided information or preferred not to respond.

Sexual Orientation

	2021/22	2022/23
LGB	1.1%	1.3%
Heterosexual	40.3%	43.8%
Other	0%	0.1%
Prefer not to say (PNTS)	1.6%	1.5%
Not known	57%	53.2%

While the majority of staff choose not to respond to this question, we have an overall increase in disclosure from 35.7% in May 2020 to 45% in March 2023.

Religion and Belief

	2021/22	2022/23
Christian	16%	16.9%
Other religions	1.3%	1.6%
None	22.4%	24.9%
PNTS	2.2%	2.3%
Not known	58.1%	54.3%

The proportion of disclosure (although higher than 2020) is still low with more than half of the workforce not responding. Of those who have responded the majority indicate that they do not have a religion.

Recruitment and Selection

We gather equality information from applicants to vacancies as part of our online application process, this is kept separate from the application form itself and is not provided to the interview panel. However, we do ask on the application form if a candidate is eligible for interview under the interview guarantee scheme as part of our Disability Confident commitment.

The table below shows recruitment equal opportunities monitoring for the period compared to the same period the previous year. It also shows the number of applicants identified by their protected characteristic and the number of those applicants who were appointed. The information is based upon equalities monitoring questionnaires voluntarily completed by applicants.

In order to provide meaningful comparisons for each selected protected characteristic, the success rates for each under represented group has been measured against the success rate of its comparator. A success rate measures the percentage of the group that were successful in gaining employment and is a more accurate way to establish potential barriers to employment.

This process references each protected characteristic in isolation and due to the anonymity of the process it is not possible to bring these together. This means that we cannot for example detail how many white, female applicants were appointed.

In addition, as our reporting process relates to data only all applicants' details are considered and it is not possible to exclude the details of those who did not meet the minimum eligibility criteria. We acknowledge that this may have an impact on the outcome of our calculations.

Protected group	No. of applicants	No of applicants shortlisted	No of offers made	Success rate of groups (% of applicants)	Success rate of groups (% of shortlisted)	Success rate of total offers ↓
Female	5591	1764	744	13%	42%	70%
Male	2271	675	266	12%	39%	25%
Prefer Not To Say (PNTS)	400	110	58	15%	53%	5%
BME	462	88	31	7%	35%	3%
White	7339	2335	977	13%	42%	91%
PNTS	461	126	60	13%	48%	6%
LGBTI+	302	84	27	9%	32%	3%
Heterosexual	7328	2283	953	13%	42%	89%
PNTS	632	182	88	14%	48%	8%
Disabled*	136	49	18	13%	37%	2%
Non-disabled/ no response	8135	2518	1050	13%	42%	98%
Other religions	215	42	14	7%	33%	1%
Christian	2151	666	259	12%	39%	24%

No religion	4873	1554	664	14%	43%	62%
PNTS	1023	287	131	13%	46%	12%

Recruitment and Success Rates 2022/23

*relates to those who indicated they were eligible for the guaranteed interview scheme

Breakdown of applicant data

Sex

- We attract a lower proportion of female applicants than is represented in our workforce (68% vs 73%)
- Women are more successful in being invited for interview (42% vs 39% of male applicants) but are only slightly more successful in being offered employment (13% of female applicants vs 12% of male applicants). However the significantly higher number of female applicants does mean that there are more than double the number of offers made to females than males.
- The significantly higher number of female applicants may mean that more vacancies may progress to a single sex interview cohort.
- The significantly higher number of female applicants may mean that more vacancies may progress to a single sex interview cohort resulting in reduced opportunity for male appointments.
- The type of posts advertised and the frequency with which these are recruited to will also impact the balance of appointments between males and females. We know, for example, that care and teaching posts are traditionally more attractive to women resulting in more female applicants, increased likelihood of a single sex interview pool and subsequently, a female appointment.

Disability

- 13% of applicants declaring a disability were offered employment – the same figure as non-disabled applicants.
- However because of the small proportion of disabled applicants they did represent only 2% of those offered employment.

Ethnicity

- BME applicants made up 6% of total applicants (compare to last Scottish data - Census 2011 - showing 4% BME population) but only 19% of BME applicants were shortlisted compared to 32% of White applicants.
- Offers of employment to BME candidates made up 3% of total offers with only 7% of BME applicants successful compared to 13% of White applicants

Overall

It is clear from applicant diversity that the key change required is to attract a more diverse candidate field both overall and to specific job types. **We need to do more to ensure that everyone with the right skills and experience feels able to apply for any vacancy.**

It is also important that people who participate in our recruitment processes and our existing employees feel comfortable to share information on their protected characteristics as this will provide us with a greater understanding of work that we need to do to ensure everyone feels welcome in Perth and Kinross Council. **We need to take further action to encourage disclosure of equality information.**

It is also important to acknowledge that difference or outcomes are often not related to a single issue therefore there is a need to consider and take action relating to:

- how different protected characteristics come together (intersect) in affecting the overall situation for our employees as well as the experience of each applicant
- how the impact of one process can impact on the outcome of another, for example we can see that our recruitment process and the profiles of those offered employment has an impact on our pay gaps.

Pay Gaps

Our latest Equal Pay Audit and Pay Gap Information relates to information gathered in April 2023. We consider information relating to gender, disability and ethnicity. However, it should be noted that while we have information on gender for all employees, for Disability and Ethnicity categories, information is based on what is provided by employees. Calculations are based on average hourly rates of pay and do not include any additional payments such as overtime, temporary higher duty payments/ acting up allowances or part time additional hours.

Sex

2021/22			2022/23		
Female Hourly rate	Male Hourly Rate	Pay Gap %	Female Hourly rate	Male Hourly Rate	Pay Gap %
19.95	19.74	-1.1%	21.34	21.28	-0.3%

The overall average hourly rate (and therefore the resultant pay gap) is most heavily influenced by the distribution of males and females across grades.

Ethnicity

2021/22			2022/23		
BME Hourly rate	White Hourly Rate*	Pay Gap %	BME Hourly rate	White Hourly Rate*	Pay Gap %
16.06	20.00	19.7%	18.78	21.48	12.6%

*This figure makes a comparison between white and non-white employees; the data attributed to the white category includes employees who are white but also includes employees who prefer not to answer or have not disclosed. The 2023 pay gap when excluding the 752 employees who have not provided a response would be 36.6% compared to 29.9% in 2022.

Disability

2021/22			2022/23		
Identified as disabled Hourly rate	Identified as not disabled Hourly Rate*	Pay Gap %	Identified as disabled Hourly rate	Identified as not disabled Hourly Rate*	Pay Gap %
19.11	19.91	4%	19.08	21.38	10.7%

*This figure includes employees who have stated they are not disabled but also those who have chosen not to disclose this information. The pay gap for 2022/23 excluding employees who have not responded would be 11.2% in favour of those who self-identify as non-disabled.

Meaningful and statistically reliable information can only be produced when we have more accurate information through employee self-disclosure of disability within the meaning of the Equality Act (2010). Efforts to support this continue to be made via ongoing communication encouraging completion of this information.

Our Plans**Recruitment**

To do our best as an organisation we need to have the best people delivering and supporting the services required by our community. In doing this we are mindful of the need to provide opportunities for those who may often find themselves excluded from employment. We have a number of tools and commitments in place to assist us in this – a Corporate Workforce Plan, accreditations such as Disability Confident, our Apprenticeship and Trainee programmes, improved equality information on the MyJobScotland site, the use of Values Based Recruitment and improving levels of data collection.

Future activities will include:

- Reviewing our recruitment advertising practice which currently is focused on the MyJobScotland website and the Council's own social media channels. To ensure that we are reaching as wide and diverse an audience as possible we will undertake an assessment of options in this area and adapt our practice in line with the findings of this exercise.

- Progressing the project with PAS to ensure that our recruitment practices are inclusive and consider specifically the requirements of neurodiverse applicants. A programme of related training and support materials will be rolled out to assist recruiting managers in this regard.
- Reviewing our recruitment processes and, where appropriate, incorporating the suggestions and guidance included in the Scottish Government Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit into our practice.

Health and Wellbeing

We are aware of the impact of the past few years on our employees and that it is vital that we work together to create and sustain a healthy working environment and positive wellbeing culture to ensure that we Live Life Well. To support this we have put in place a range of support mechanisms and have produced a Health and Wellbeing plan both of which continue to be developed through analysis of wellbeing data and feedback received through different mechanisms including a dedicated focus group made up of employees from across Council departments.

We seek to support our employees through ill health prevention, early intervention and building resilience, particularly in times of change. We have a large workforce which is geographically dispersed and culturally diverse. Providing managers with the tools and support to manage their employees is fundamental as we evolve our approach. Our Health and Wellbeing Framework is principles-led, evidence-based and outcome-driven. It is supported by the provision of an Occupational Health service which can provide advice and specific services such as physiotherapy, counselling support and health surveillance to support employees to remain at work and in continued employment in the event of changes in their health.

Future activities will include :

- Building on our recent Disability Confident re-accreditation at Leader level by working as part of a geographical group of employers to gain examples of best practice from others. We will then identify which practices to adopt within the Council and to support other employers in Perth and Kinross to develop their accreditation activity.
- Recognising that our highest cause of absence remains mental health issues; we will continue to review and develop the suite of information and tools created during the pandemic to support employees in this area. We will also continue to promote the Able Futures mental health support service and review options for other external support. This will supplement the continued focus on increasing the knowledge and skills of managers to support colleagues experiencing mental health issues and to develop a healthy workplace.

Employment Policy and Practice

We are committed to developing employment policy and practices that not only support and enable delivery of our corporate priorities for the people of Perth and Kinross but also allow colleagues to feel supported while at work and to have a balance to their working life.

It is important when developing policies and practice that we engage with those who will use them. We engage with recognised trade unions and colleagues generally and through specific groups to understand what is important to them, what issues they face and how we can go forward taking account of their lived experience as an employee and citizen of Perth and Kinross. Examples of this approach include the development of Trans Support Guidance which is being developed in consultation with the LGBTI+ staff network and which will be launched in 2023, the Health and Wellbeing employee focus group and the group of neurodiverse employees working with PAS to develop a toolkit to support managers, employees and job applicants.

Future activities will include :

- Improving the quality of our workforce equality data with further promotion of the importance of providing this information and the process used.
- Offering a more comprehensive opportunity to employees to disclose their gender identity including trans status.
- Continuing to work with trade unions and staff network groups to identify key issue that our employment practice needs to address and the development of policies to achieve this.
- Reviewing our employment policy and practice in line with the approaches suggested by the CloseThe Gap as part of the Equally Safe at Work programme.
- Working to support our employees who also undertake caring responsibilities for family members.
- Launching flexible working guidance designed to support the delivery of services to the citizens of Perth and Kinross whilst facilitating practices that will support the work life balance of our employees and takes account of issues specific to individual protected characteristics.