



# **Orkney Islands Council**

## **Equality Outcomes 2017–2018**

All our written information can be made available, on request, in a range of different formats and languages. If you would like this document in any other language or format please contact Emma Chattington, Equalities Officer on 01856873535 or email [emma.chattington@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:emma.chattington@orkney.gov.uk)

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## Contents:

Introduction.....	4
Legal background .....	4
Outcomes .....	4
Involvement and Consultation .....	6
Achieving our outcomes .....	7
Contact .....	7
Equality Outcome 1 (Council and Education Authority Outcome).....	8
Protected Characteristic.....	8
General Duty.....	8
Output .....	8
Original involvement.....	9
Link to local priorities:.....	9
Supporting the Orkney Community Plan: .....	9
Evidence .....	9
Equality Outcome 2 (Council and Education Authority Outcome).....	11
Protected Characteristic.....	11
General Duty.....	11
Output .....	11
Original involvement.....	11
Link to local priorities:.....	11
Evidence .....	12
Equality Outcome 3 (Council and Education Authority Outcome).....	13
Protected Characteristic.....	13
General Duty.....	13
Output .....	13
Involvement.....	13
Evidence .....	13
Equality Outcome 4 (Council and Education Authority Outcome).....	14
Protected Characteristic.....	14
General Duty.....	14
Output .....	14
Original involvement.....	14
Link to local priorities:.....	14
The Orkney Community Plan: .....	15
Evidence .....	15

Equality Outcome 5 (Council and Education Authority Outcome).....	16
Protected Characteristic.....	16
General Duty.....	16
Output .....	16
Original involvement.....	16
Link to local priorities:.....	16
Evidence .....	16
Equality Outcome 6 (Council Outcome).....	18
Protected Characteristic.....	18
General Duty.....	18
Output .....	18
Original involvement.....	18
Evidence .....	18
Equality Outcome 7 (Council and Education Authority Outcome).....	20
Protected Characteristic.....	20
General Duty.....	20
Output .....	20
Original involvement.....	20
Link to local priorities:.....	20
Evidence .....	21
Equality Outcome 8 (Education Authority Outcome) .....	22
General Duty.....	22
Output .....	22
Evidence .....	22

## **Introduction**

Orkney Islands Council and Education Authority are committed to promoting equality, which means recognising that everyone has different needs and taking positive action to ensure that we are all able to participate in society. We want Orkney to be a community where we all have the opportunity to fulfil our potential.

All public authorities have had a legal requirement to produce and publish a set of equality outcomes since 30 April 2013 and are required to develop and publish a new set of outcomes by 30 April 2017. These outcomes are the results we aim to achieve in promoting equality, tackling discrimination and fostering good relations. The equality outcomes will apply to people with the protected characteristics which are listed in the legal background.

The equality outcomes do not encompass the work we already do to reduce inequality and ensure fairness. They are developed in addition to this based on a range of sources of evidence that suggest that if we also focus our efforts on these areas we can achieve real changes in people's lives.

## **Legal background**

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single equality duty covering the nine protected characteristics of: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The single equality duty is in two parts. The general duty came into effect from April 2011 and requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. The purpose of the general duty is to ensure that the Council proactively considers equality when carrying out its work.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 came into force in May 2012. The specific duties provide a framework to help public authorities meet their general duty. One of the requirements of the Regulations was that public authorities produce and publish a set of equality outcomes every four years.

Local authorities and education authorities are listed separately in the Regulations. For that reason each equality outcome shows whether it applies to the Council, to Education or whether it is an overall outcome which applies to both.

## **Outcomes**

Equality outcomes are objectives we aim to achieve in order to progress the requirements of our general equality duty. They are not what we do, but the changes or effects resulting from what we do. These changes may be for individuals, groups, families, organisations or communities.

The Council and Education Authority set out eight equality outcomes for the period 2013-2017 and have reported on progress in 2015 and 2017. The duty to set equality outcomes is relatively new and setting these outcomes has inevitably been a developmental process for public sector organisations. Since the requirement to set

outcomes came into effect in 2013, the Equality and Human Rights Commission has published a comprehensive review on progress towards greater equality and human rights protection in Britain. This review has recommended the following areas requiring improvements:

- Improve the evidence and the ability to assess how fair society is.
- Raise standards and close attainment gaps in education.
- Encourage fair recruitment, development and reward in employment.
- Support improved living conditions in cohesive communities.
- Encourage democratic participation and ensure access to justice.
- Ensure that all people can access the health services they need.
- Tackle targeted harassment and abuse of people who share particular protected characteristics.

These improvement areas have been considered during the review of the equality outcomes for the Council and Education Authority.

The review of the equality outcomes has taken into account progress against the set of outcomes along with supporting evidence from national priorities, evidence and research, as well as local priorities and information.

The Annual Equality Report in 2015 included some revisions to the equality outcomes following the Equality and Human Rights Commission Scotland 'Improving Equality Outcomes programme' review. This review resulted in some of the equality outcomes being amended and as such, reporting on progress was more limited than over a full four year reporting period.

Building on learning from our previous reports, and in order to better assess the impact of the interventions in place and to establish a more robust evidence base from which to identify and analyse any trends, we will continue to deliver outputs relating to the current equality outcomes set out on page 5 onwards, for a further year.

We will seek to prepare a new set of equality outcomes in 2018 following further review. This will support our ambition to further align our equality outcomes to our organisational planning cycle strengthening the opportunity to link closely to the strategic priorities and plans and to increase the impetus for their delivery and their impact.

Whilst there has been good progress made across each of the equality outcomes, we have reviewed each of the outcomes as a whole and feel that there are some areas that require more work and some areas that continue to remain a priority for delivery in light of both local and national evidence.

Each outcome details which protected characteristic it applies to, which aspects of our general duty it will help us to meet and who was involved in its development. We have also included the output (what we will do) and the evidence which led us to set the outcome.

Because outcomes should be prepared based on the principles of proportionality and relevance some have been set in respect of all the protected characteristics rather than being limited to the specific characteristic the evidence related to.

## **Involvement and Consultation**

As required by the legislation we involved as many people as possible with a protected characteristic, or their representatives, in the development of the outcomes. We used information and evidence which had been brought to our attention from a range of sources and, in addition to that, contacted a number of organisations, groups and individuals and invited them to provide input into the development of our outcomes. The involvement is detailed in each equality outcome.

You will see that Orkney Equality Forum was involved in each equality outcome. The Forum it is a group with a wide and diverse membership. The Forum is proactive in seeking the views of the equality and diversity communities in Orkney on a wide range of topics and provides opportunities for people and groups to provide input through its membership; in a small community some members of particular equality and diversity communities would prefer to remain anonymous.

We carried out a consultation on our proposed outcomes over a six week period from 28 January until 10 March 2013. The consultation document was made available as follows:

- Electronically on the Council website.
- Paper copies were available from the Council's Customer Services in Kirkwall, the Stromness Cash Office and the Kirkwall and Stromness libraries.
- To the wider community and all employees through a press release.
- To elected members with a briefing note.
- To partner organisations.
- To Orkney Equality Forum.
- To Orkney Community Planning Partnership.
- To the Access Panel Orkney.
- To Orkney Faith Group.
- To Orkney Minds.
- To the Language Link.
- To the ESOL students at Orkney College.
- To the Equality Network.
- To Stonewall.
- To interested individuals upon request.

The consultation document was also made available in any other format or language, upon request.

Only a small number of comments received and these were very positive. This perhaps reflects the extensive involvement process undertaken to compile the proposed outcomes and consultation document.

## **Achieving our outcomes**

We will publish a report on progress we have made to achieve these equality outcomes no later than 30 April 2018.

### **Contact**

If you want to get in touch with us about our equality outcomes or any other equality matters please contact:

Emma Chattington, Equalities Officer , HR and Performance, Orkney Islands Council, Council Offices, Kirkwall, KW15 1NY.

Telephone 01856873535.

Email [emma.chattington@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:emma.chattington@orkney.gov.uk)

## **Equality Outcome 1 (Council and Education Authority Outcome)**

More young, disabled and long term unemployed people are in work and training.

### **Protected Characteristic**

Age.

Disability.

### **General Duty**

Advance equality of opportunity.

### **Output**

As a socially responsible employer we will lead by example, providing work experience, modern apprenticeships and graduate placements for Orkney's youth and long term unemployed people by taking the following action:

1. Supporting youth employment opportunities within the Council for the period 2017-18 including where possible:
  - Work experience placements.
  - Modern apprenticeships.
  - Graduate traineeships.
2. Offering a range of work experience opportunities to people facing barriers to employment, who fall outwith the group referred to at 1 above.
3. The Education Authority will provide support and information for all young people to access relevant work and training through:
  - Ensuring transitions between senior phase and subsequent destinations are fully supported to ensure maximum opportunities for further training and / or work opportunities for young people. Senior phase is a stage in Curriculum for Excellence covering 15 to 18 year olds (secondary 4 to 6 and may include Orkney College).
  - Close partnership working within and outwith the education sector, including business, career and third sector partners to ensure the full potential of opportunities are offered to all our young people.
  - Careful monitoring / tracking of leaver destination data, carefully scrutinising any particular trends or dips, particularly focusing on protected groups and subsequently gather the views of identified groups of young people to ensure that the service is addressing their particular needs and requirements.
  - This will be measured through the School Leaver Destination Return.



## **Original involvement**

- Orkney Community Planning Partnership's Employability Short Term Working Group and Employability Strategic Group.
- Orkney Equality Forum.
- Jobcentre Plus.
- Elected members and officers of Orkney Islands Council (OIC) during development of Council Plan.
- Senior Management Team, OIC.
- Executive Director of Corporate Services, OIC.
- HR and Performance, OIC.

## **Link to local priorities:**

Orkney Island Council priority relating to Orkney's Economic Development – A skilled workforce:

- As a socially responsible employer, we will lead by example and each year, provide a number of workplace opportunities for Orkney's young people and long-term unemployed.

## **Supporting the Orkney Community Plan:**

A vibrant economic environment and healthy and sustainable communities:

- Support for the development of greater employment opportunities including work placements, apprenticeships, graduate placements and supported employment.
- Explore opportunities with partners for development of employment opportunities, for example modern apprenticeships for people with long term conditions.

## **Evidence**

According to How Fair is Scotland? published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2016, age-related employment gaps have widened with young people less likely to be in work. The report also highlights that unemployment rates increased more for disabled people than for non-disabled people.

The Skills Development Scotland Equality Evidence Review 2015 suggests that those with disabilities in the labour market are likely to increase due to changes in benefits entitlements. They go on to highlight that disabled people in the labour market face multiple barriers to entry and progression due to discrimination and a lack of understanding for the issues facing disabled people.

Labour Market figures for Orkney (June 2016) illustrate that there were 61 individuals who claimed Jobseeker's Allowance. Of these, 10 fell within the 16 to 24 age group. Employment rates for the overall population were 86% and in comparison, for those who had indicated a disability, employment rates were 60%.

As of June 2015, the Office of National Statistics has changed the definition of the Claimant Count to include all out of work Universal Credit claimants. At the moment, this new definition is only available at the Scotland level and is not yet broken down

by local authority, age or duration. As a result, the JSA Claimant Count has been renamed to indicate that its scope is now limited to claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance only and does not contain the additional Universal Credit claimants now included in the new headline Claimant Count definition. The measure of the number of people receiving Universal Credit principally for the reason of being unemployed is still being developed by the Department for Work and Pensions. Consequently this component of the total Claimant Count does not yet correctly reflect the target population of unemployed claimants and is subject to revisions.

'These are Our Bairns: a guide for community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent' published by the Scottish Government in 2008 states that, 'Councils are often the largest employer in a local area with a wider range of jobs than any other organisation in either the public or the private sector. Councils should be able to offer Looked After children and young people and care leavers support into employment, whether this be in terms of work experience or building capacity such as preparing job applications or interview skills. It could also be through reserving a number of apprenticeships or training placements for their care leavers, sometimes referred to as "the family firm" concept. This is not to suggest preferential treatment, but rather to fully utilise the potential to expose young people who are Looked After to the range of employment options which are available to them and the skills they need to take them up.'

The evidence used in informing the output for the Education Authority came from the School Leaver Destination Return (SLDR). This is a statistical return undertaken by Skills Development Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government and is based on a follow up of young people who have left school between 1 August and 31 July each year. The report analyses the characteristics of leavers and their reported destination after leaving school. Analysis of positive destinations, such as higher / further education and employment, and negative destinations is also included. Although the SLDR is reported at a national level, Skills Development Scotland also produce Community Planning Partnership reports at a local authority level.

According to the latest Annual Population Survey results produced by the Office for National Statistics key labour market results for the year ending 31 December 2016 show that there is considerable variation in employment rates for those aged 16-64 across Scotland's local authorities. The highest employment rates were seen in Shetland Islands (86.6%), Orkney Islands (86.0%) and Argyll and Bute (78.4%) while the lowest employment rates were seen in North Ayrshire (64.4%), Dundee City (66.0%) and East Ayrshire (66.3%). Comparable data for Scotland and the UK showed that Scotland's employment rate (72.9%) was lower than the UK's (73.9%).

## **Equality Outcome 2 (Council and Education Authority Outcome)**

Ensure there are no barriers in recruitment, training or promotion opportunities.

### **Protected Characteristic**

All (see note below).

NB: "All" signifies that all of the following protected characteristics are specifically addressed as part of the stated outcome: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership status, race, pregnancy and maternity status, sex, sexual orientation and religion or belief. However, in some instances the Council may be unable to report on outcome progress for certain protected characteristics due to limitations in the monitoring and information available.

### **General Duty**

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Advance equality of opportunity.

### **Output**

The Council and the Education Authority will develop a clear understanding of our local population breakdown and will seek to collect data by protected characteristic from 100% of our employees to ensure there are no barriers in recruitment, training or promotion with a target response rate of 80%.

### **Original involvement**

- Black Leadership Network of Scotland.
- Orkney Equality Forum.
- Senior Management Team, OIC.
- Executive Director of Corporate Services, OIC.
- HR and Performance, OIC.

### **Link to local priorities:**

The HR System Development Project seeks to centralise the recording and storage of relevant HR data in one place. It will help address the current requirement for the service administration teams to collect, collate and store this data in a decentralised way and will also enable employees to update some of their own personal information, including protected characteristics, through part of the system known as MyView. As part of the communications plan for the launch of MyView, employees will be encouraged to check and update their personal information as part of the registration process. It is anticipated that this will improve the level of returns in relation to protected characteristics.

This system will also enable significantly enhanced management information allowing for better information and quicker decision making.

## **Evidence**

The Black Leadership Network, with the support of a range of national race equality organisations, wrote to all Chief Executives in June 2012 asking that we set an outcome to develop a clear understanding of our local population breakdown and will have collected data by ethnicity on 80% of our employees by 2015 rising to 100% by 2017. They state that while this relates to 'race' it could easily be extended to other protected characteristics. They strongly believe that unless organisations get the basics of access to appropriate employment of a representative workforce right, Scotland will neither be able to address the historical disadvantage nor make the progress on equality that it needs to. It would appear fair and logical to extend this outcome to all protected characteristics as it would help us ensure there are no barriers relating to any of the protected characteristics. It is not proposed that a target of data collection of 100% is set; this is not achievable because employees and potential employees have the right to refuse to provide this information and there will always be those that exercise this right.

Whilst progress has been made in collecting data by protected characteristic from our employees there is still progress to be made in achieving this outcome with a current response rate at around 66%.

## **Equality Outcome 3 (Council and Education Authority Outcome)**

Ensure terms of employment and Human Resource policies and procedures are applied fairly and consistently and in ways that promote equal opportunities and do not disadvantage employees.

### **Protected Characteristic**

All.

### **General Duty**

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Advance equality of opportunity.

### **Output**

Monitor and ensure that Council conditions of service and Human Resources policies and procedures, including recruitment, learning and development, disciplinary, grievance, management of poor work performance and dignity at work are applied fairly and consistently and in a way that promotes equal opportunities and does not disadvantage employees on the basis of the nine protected characteristics. A minimum of five policy documents will be monitored annually.

### **Involvement**

- Orkney Equality Forum.
- Senior Management Team, OIC.
- Executive Director of Corporate Services, OIC.
- HR and Performance, OIC.

### **Evidence**

It is not suggested that policies are not currently being applied fairly, but as stated at Outcome 2 there is a lack of equality data on our local population and employees and this is a proactive preventative measure to ensure that we are being fair and consistent and no groups are being disadvantaged.

In the Scottish Social Attitudes 2015 report by the Scottish Government, the four groups attracting the highest levels of discriminatory attitudes in relation to their suitability to the job of being a primary school teacher had remained unchanged between 2006 and 2015. These groups are: Gypsy/Travellers, someone aged 70, someone who experiences depression from time to time and someone who has undergone gender reassignment.

## **Equality Outcome 4 (Council and Education Authority Outcome)**

Ensure a skilled workforce and training in Orkney to optimise opportunities in the Renewables Sector.

### **Protected Characteristic**

Sex.

### **General Duty**

Advance equality of opportunity.

### **Output**

The Council will support links to education by exploring ways to ensure renewables training links with schools, colleges and investors based in Orkney. We will develop a strategy to ensure all partners contribute to the wider training of renewables sector opportunities.

The Education Authority will encourage an interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects. This will give young people an understanding of the types of careers that are open to them if they study STEM subjects and motivate and enthuse them to develop these skills further. We will promote the use of role models who will be able to promote their skills to pupils, actively encourage them to enjoy STEM subjects and inform them about the unique career opportunities that are available to them. While this activity will be aimed at all young people it will include the positive recognition of the role of females within STEM industries, and particularly within the Renewables Sector locally. The use of this positive action will be monitored by schools. We will also take action to ensure that all schools are embedding equalities into their activities and adhering to the equalities policy and values.

### **Original involvement**

- Orkney Equality Forum.
- Elected members and officers of OIC during development of Council Plan.
- Senior Management Team, OIC.
- Executive Director of Corporate Services, OIC.
- Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure, OIC.
- Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, OIC.
- HR and Performance, OIC.

### **Link to local priorities:**

Orkney Islands Council priority:

- We will work to develop proposals to establish a joint venture arrangement with HIE to develop Orkney Research Campus.

- Orkney Islands Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise have entered into a partnership agreement to create the Orkney Research and Innovation Campus (including renewables) will begin on site before the end of 2017.

## **The Orkney Community Plan:**

Orkney is widely recognised as a location for innovation and the application of experimental thinking in sustainable development in an island context.

## **Evidence**

These proposals feature in Orkney Islands Council: Our Plan 2013-2018. Low Carbon Orkney – Renewables, Energy and Opportunity, specifically 7. Ensuring a skilled workforce and training in Orkney to optimise opportunities in the Renewables Sector. Some of the activity in this target area aims to explore ways of linking renewables training through schools, colleges and investors based in Orkney.

Developing Renewables opportunities and exposure to the range of potential career options in the sector will benefit all, but may have a heightened impact on women who hadn't considered a science and engineering based career path. The Chair of the Commission on Workforce Issues said, at a Women's Employment Summit held on 12 September 2012, that although women are employed across a diverse range of jobs the leaky pipeline in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) industries persists. While young women may break gender stereotype moulds as they enter the labour market any positive trends appear to be reversing given that the current patterns of participation in Modern Apprenticeships across Scotland display obvious gender based occupational segregation.

Lack of career opportunity has been cited as being a reason for leavers, in particular women, not to return to Orkney. According to the Orkney Population Change Study published by Hall Aitken in 2009, 'Those that leave the islands and remain away are more likely to be motivated by employment progression. Twice as many identified opportunities for career progress as a reason for leaving. And twice as many female leavers as male leavers rule out returning, reflecting the perception of limited job opportunities on Orkney. For those who consider returning, jobs and career progression are the most common barriers.'

There are a wide range of statistics which show the low take up of science, engineering, technology and math subjects and careers by girls. According to the Skills Development Scotland, there are gender differences in subject choice early on in the education system. Girls remain less likely to choose science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. These differences continue throughout school, college, university and are then reflected in the wider occupational segregation within the labour market including apprenticeships.

## **Equality Outcome 5 (Council and Education Authority Outcome)**

Greater sensitivity by employees to the diversity of service users and colleagues and to equality issues.

### **Protected Characteristic**

All.

### **General Duty**

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Foster good relations.

### **Output**

1. Raise awareness by making training (face-to-face or i-Learning) available to all employees and mandatory for new employees. Refresher training should be mandatory every three years. (Overall output)

2. Review all local registrar policies and procedures to ensure that reference to Civil Partnerships features similarly to references to Marriage. (Council output)

### **Original involvement**

- Cabinet Secretary for Justice.
- Equality Network (works for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender [LGBT] equality and human rights in Scotland).
- Orkney Equality Forum.
- Orkney Faith Group.
- Kirkwall Council of Churches.
- Senior Management Team, OIC.
- Executive Director of Corporate Services, OIC.
- HR and Performance, OIC.
- Head of Health and Community Care, OIC.

### **Link to local priorities:**

Sustainability is an especial challenge for Orkney's smaller isles. Whilst the overall population may be growing, there has been a steady drift away from the isles towards mainland Orkney. The Orkney Community Plan identifies that access to services is a key driver behind this trend, with all of Orkney's smaller isles ranking among the most deprived 10% of communities in Scotland in this regard.

### **Evidence**

Whilst some progress has been made in recent years in relation to the promotion of equality across a wide range of sectors of Scottish society, discriminatory attitudes remain particularly in relation to immigration and the labour market according to the



Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2015: Attitudes to Discrimination and Positive Action, published by the Scottish Government.

The results of Orkney Equality Forum's Survey 'Attitudes to Discrimination and Positive Action' carried out in 2012 were similar in that they did not make entirely positive reading. While 68.7% of people felt Orkney should do everything it could to get rid of all kinds of prejudice, 31.3% thought there was sometimes good reason to be prejudiced. The report makes it clear that, while the majority of people do not hold discriminatory views and are increasingly accepting of diversity, there are still groups in society who experience discrimination and intolerance.

The Equality Network advises that they believe there are a small number of people living in Orkney who have been through the gender reassignment process. According to 'Potential areas of concern between local authorities and the Transsexual/ Transgender community' published by Nicola James and Allana Strain in 2012 gender identity issues include conflict in families and losing contact with family and friends. Receiving health and social care can be problematic. Almost 35% of Trans people have attempted suicide at least once.

The much smaller numbers entering into civil partnerships in Orkney (in 2015 there was one civil partnership compared to 114 marriages) mean that staff encounter service users who have entered into a civil partnership much less frequently than service users who are married. Training for staff should include information on the need for staff to be aware of the possible existence of civil partnership; sometimes undisclosed. Staff are already aware of the need to respect the legal rights of spouses, particularly when important decisions are being made which may involve ill service users or end of life issues. However, it might be less obvious that a civil partnership exists.

Is Scotland Fairer? published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2016 states that economic and demographic trends present Scotland with some challenges. Scotland's population is growing and aging, at the same time as public sector organisations have to work within significant spending constraints. Subsequently, public sector organisations will need to continue to understand and meet the needs of the communities as they change.

A briefing paper; Island Oddity: the theory and practice of island-proofing (2016) highlights the differences in public sector provision for island communities. It states that individuals living in close-knit communities with a history of self-sufficiency are demonstrably less likely to claim state benefits, which reduces their own income, reduces spending in the local economy and also reduces central government funding to the local authority where this is calculated pro rata to benefit claims.

It goes on to say that so called 'routine' public services are both complicated and expensive to provide at island level.

## **Equality Outcome 6 (Council Outcome)**

Improve access to the democratic process.

### **Protected Characteristic**

Disability.

Age.

### **General Duty**

Advance equality of opportunity.

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

### **Output**

Carry out a review of the percentage turn out to local election.

Carry out a review of the percentage of councillor applicants by some protected characteristics.

### **Original involvement**

- Orkney Equality Forum.
- Senior Management Team, OIC.
- Executive Director of Corporate Services, OIC.
- HR and Performance, OIC.
- Head of IT and Support Services, OIC.
- Elections Manager, OIC.

### **Evidence**

All local authorities are under a duty to review their UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places at least once every four years. The Council completed a review of polling places in 2011 and a number of changes were made for the election held in May. As a result of feedback and other issues that have emerged, such as questions regarding lower turnout, there is a need to undertake a further review to ensure there are no barriers for people exercising their democratic right to vote. This will include assessing views on the suitability and accessibility of the current polling stations, for example whether voters found getting into the building difficult or parking was a problem on polling day.

In the Local Government election in May 2012 the turnout was 50.8% compared to 55.9% in 2007.

In the Scottish Parliamentary election in 2011 the turnout was 49.9% compared to 55.19% in 2007.

Source: Elections Manager

According to the Is Scotland Fairer? Report published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2016, some people with certain characteristics remained less likely to participate in the political process. This includes young people and people from some ethnic minorities were less likely to report being politically active. Women, disabled people and people from ethnic minorities were also politically under-represented both at national and local levels across Scotland.

## **Equality Outcome 7 (Council and Education Authority Outcome)**

An increased proportion of Council communication adheres to the Principles of Inclusive Communication good practice standards.

### **Protected Characteristic**

All.

### **General Duty**

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Advance equality of opportunity.

### **Output**

Take a consistent approach across the Council to more inclusive communication and work towards the Principles of Inclusive Communication published by the Scottish Government in 2011 through training and awareness raising. The Principles are as follows:

- Communication accessibility and physical accessibility are equally important.
- Every community or group will include people with different communication support needs.
- Communication is a two-way process of understanding others and expressing yourself.
- Be flexible in the way your service is provided.
- Effective user involvement will include the participation of people with different communication support needs.
- Keep trying.

The full document is available at the following link:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/09/14082209/17>

### **Original involvement**

- Orkney Equality Forum.
- Senior Management Team, OIC.
- Executive Director of Corporate Services, OIC.
- HR and Performance, OIC.
- Head of IT and Support Services, OIC.
- Communications Team, OIC.

### **Link to local priorities:**

Projects are underway to redesign the council website and to implement a Customer Service Platform which will enable customers to interact with us digitally should they

wish to do so. The design and implementation of these platforms will be critical in our ability to provide services inclusive of our diverse communities.

## **Evidence**

Anecdotal evidence would suggest there is currently a lack of consistency.

Socitm undertakes an annual 'Better Connected' assessment with the purpose of identifying good practice in the development of local authority websites using evidence-based research. The 2015 report suggests that 'Achieving a high-class experience online for all relevant tasks that the customer needs to complete is the cornerstone for any local authority undertaking a digital transformation of services.'

A 2015 Ipsos MORI survey highlights the differences between generations in terms of frequency of internet use with 85% of generation y accessing the internet several times a day in comparison to pre-war generation at 20%, and methods of accessing the internet with 73% of generation y accessing it via mobile devices in comparison to 7% of pre-war generation. Such evidence suggests that improvements in digital services need to be adaptable to cater for wide-ranging needs and abilities and to meet the expectations of an increasing adult population for the provision of information and access to services.

The report on Age and Isolation published by The Equal Opportunities Committee in 2015 states that technology cannot replace face to face contact for both younger and older people. Also, that there should be services to target people who may be digitally excluded. The report goes on to say that the development of internet sites is very important for both younger and older people with an increasing number of older people accessing the internet. For younger people, evidence suggests that the most isolated can use forums and networks to stay connected and that social media provides a number of platforms that are free for third sector organisations. It highlights that the development of the right kind of information online can have an impact on those people who do not want to come into contact with services and that targeting and developing local material, with information that is relevant and up-to-date, is extremely important to move things forward and plan for the future.

## **Equality Outcome 8 (Education Authority Outcome)**

Ensure there are no barriers for looked after children and young people for opportunities within education.

Protected Characteristic

Age.

### **General Duty**

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Advance equality of opportunity.

### **Output**

A system will be developed and embedded to ensure we proactively identify potential barriers in accessing education at an early stage for looked after children. This, in conjunction with the process currently in place to monitor the educational outcomes for looked after children and young people, will identify areas for improvement. This will allow for early intervention if difficulties arise, either through a single-agency or multi-agency plan.

Original involvement

- Orkney Equality Forum.
- Executive Director of Corporate Services, OIC.
- HR and Performance, OIC.
- Head of Schools, OIC.
- Equality and Human Rights Commission.

### **Evidence**

According to information provided by Orkney Health and Care, as at 31 July 2014 Orkney had 39 Looked After Children. The 39 Looked After Children comprise more girls than boys and range in age from under a year old to 17 years of age. The authority's Looked After and Accommodated children are in a range of child care placements, including local fostering households, residential child care establishments, local kinship care households and out of Orkney placements. The goal for all children who become looked after is to establish long term stability of care, whether this is a return home, with extended family or alternative carers (residential, foster or adoptive). Robust reviewing arrangements are critical to ensuring that looked after children's plans are progressing timeously, making a difference and that well-being needs are met.

Education Outcomes for Scotland's looked after children, published by the Scottish Government on 22 June 2016, gives the following information on the educational outcomes of young people who were looked after at any point from August 2014 to July 2015 and who left school during 2014/2015:

- In 2014/15 almost three quarters (73 per cent) of looked after school leavers were aged 16 and under (i.e. they left school at the earliest point they could) compared to over one quarter (27 per cent) of school leavers more generally.
- More than three-quarters (77 per cent) of children looked after for a full year who left school during or at the end of 2014/15 were in a positive destination three months after leaving school, compared with nine in ten (93 per cent) of all 2014/15 school leavers.
- The rate of exclusions among looked after children is much higher than in the general school population (218 cases per 1,000 looked after pupils, compared to 27 per 1,000 in the general school population), and is falling at a similar rate. However, the absolute fall in the rates of exclusions for looked after children is much greater, but they are coming from a much worse position.

The Guide to Getting It Right For Every Child published by the Scottish Government in 2012, promotes 'an integrated and co-ordinated approach to multi-agency planning. It looks to practitioners to work in accordance with legislation and guidance but also expects agencies to think beyond their immediate remit, drawing on the skills and knowledge of others as necessary and thinking in a broad, holistic way. For example, a care plan for a child looked after by the local authority, a health care plan, or an individualised education plan should be incorporated within the child's plan where the child or young person's circumstances require this.'

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Is Scotland Fairer? published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2016 states that the attainment gap between looked after children and other pupils narrowed but attainment levels remain well below that of other pupils.