

# **Equality Scheme**

**for**

**Mid Ulster District Council**

**2015 – 2020**

***Quick Read Version***

## **Contact Details**

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This document is available in a range of formats on request

**Drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern  
Ireland Act 1998.**

## **What is Section 75 and the Northern Ireland Act 1998**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires the Council to pay due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability and persons without
- persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition without prejudice to the obligations above Council are required to promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

## **Our Equality Scheme and Responsibility for Implementation**

The Act requires Mid Ulster Council to set out an equality scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75. The scheme sets out Council's commitment to meeting its Section 75 obligations including the commitment of the necessary resources to ensure that our scheme can be implemented effectively. Progress on implementing our Equality Scheme will be reported annually to the Council and to the Equality Commission.

## **Who We Are and What We Do**

Detailed information on the Council's role and functions is available in the full scheme and on our website

[www.midulstercouncil.org/equality](http://www.midulstercouncil.org/equality)

## **Consultation and Engagement**

Council recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. Council will seek views and consult on our equality scheme, action measures, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.

## **Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies**

In order to assess the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity the Council will undertake the following:

- **Screening**

The purpose of screening is to identify policies that are likely to have an impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

Screening should be completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development/review process. The lead role in the screening of a policy is taken by the policy author on advice from the Corporate Policy and Equality Officer.

- **Good Relations**

When screening identifies that there are opportunities to promote good relation, then the policy will be referred to the Council's Good Relations Working Group for consideration. The Group will consider the potential opportunities and assess if and how the overall impact of a decision/policy is likely to promote good relations to include the level of impact.

- **Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)**

Once a policy is screened and screening has identified that an equality impact assessment is necessary, we will carry out the EQIA in accordance with Equality Commission guidance. This is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of that policy.

- **What we publish**

Screening reports are published three times per year. Completed screening template(s) are accessible on the Council website at: [www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Equality/Screening-Report](http://www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Equality/Screening-Report).

Equality Impact Assessment reports are published once the impact assessment has been completed. All information we publish is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request.

- **Monitoring**

Council are committed to monitoring our policies and services to ensure effective implementation of our Section 75 duties information involves the processing of sensitive personal data (data relating to the racial or ethnic origin of individuals, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, etc.). In order to carry out monitoring in a confidential and effective manner, the Council follows guidance from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Equality Commission.

## **Commitment to staff training**

We recognise that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties. To this end we have introduced a training programme for all staff and an awareness raising programme for all elected members.

## **Access to information and services**

To ensure equality of opportunity we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Council is also committed to ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories. The Council also adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

## **Assessing public access to information and services**

We annually monitor our functions, in relation to access to information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity is promoted. It includes:

- Monitoring of complaints
- Consideration and implementation of reasonable adjustments under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Satisfaction Surveys
- Access to interpreting/translation services
- Article 55 Review

## **Publication and Review of our Equality Scheme**

Council's Equality Scheme is available in alternative formats by making a request using the above details. It is also available on the Mid Ulster District Council website at: [www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Equality](http://www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Equality)