

## **Mid Ulster District Council Equality Action Plan (2021-2026)**

This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as audio, braille, easy read or large print and may be provided in alternative languages, upon request. Please contact Mid Ulster District Council's Corporate Policy & Equality Officer on 03000 132 132 Ex 24612 or via [ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org)

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### **1. Introduction**

Mid Ulster District Council is required to comply with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act). The act relates specifically to two statutory duties set out below:

In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are required to have 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, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

## **2. The Community Plan- A 10 Year Action Plan for Mid Ulster**

The Community Plan has identified the following themes and associated outcomes:

- **Economic Growth**
  - We prosper in a stronger and competitive economy
  - We have more people working in a diverse economy
  - Our towns and villages are vibrant and competitive
- **Infrastructure**
  - We are better connected through appropriate infrastructure
  - We increasingly value our environment and enhance it for our children
  - We enjoy increased access to affordable quality housing
- **Education and Skills**
  - Our people are better qualified and more skilled
  - We give our children and young people the best chance in life
  - We are more entrepreneurial, innovative and creative
- **Health & Wellbeing**
  - We are better enabled to live longer healthier and more active lives
  - We have availability to the right service, in the right place at the right time
  - We care more for those most vulnerable and in need
- **Vibrant & Safe Communities**
  - We are a safer community
  - We have a greater value and respect for diversity
  - We have fewer people living in poverty and fewer areas of disadvantage

The **vision** set out in the Community Plan is:

*'Mid Ulster...a welcoming place where our people are content, healthy and safe; educated and skilled; where our economy is thriving; our environment and heritage are sustained; and where our public service excel'.*

## **3. Corporate Vision and Values**

Mid Ulster District Council has also agreed a Corporate Plan 2020-2024. The plan sets out Council's priorities for the four year period it covers. When Mid Ulster District Council was formed in April 2015, the Council agreed that its vision was to aspire to be 'at the heart of our community'. This vision continues to strongly represent the ethos and ambition of Mid Ulster District Council.

This vision is underpinned by the following **values**:

- Citizen and customer-focussed- Designing and delivering our services in response to and around the needs of our customers and within our resources.
- Innovative- New and better ways of doing what we do.
- Excellence- Striving to excel in every aspect of our work, being accountable for and delivering the best, value for money services.
- Trustworthy- Working for our communities in a spirit of friendliness and openness by delivering fair, transparent, equitable and ethical services to all customers.
- Respect- Treating each other, our customers and our stakeholders in the same considerate way that we wish to be treated ourselves.
- Inclusive- Creating a culture which values, supports and celebrates diversity to the benefit of the organisation and the people we serve.

The Corporate Plan has identified five themes:

Theme 1: Leadership

Theme 2: Service Delivery

Theme 3: Economy

Theme 4: Environment

Theme 5: Communities

These guiding principles are the cornerstones of our action plans, policies and strategies.

The Corporate Plan also commits to:

- addressing rurality
- promoting equality of opportunity and good relations
- continuously improving our services
- designing and delivering our services sustainably
- working collaboratively across the public, private, community and voluntary sector to achieve shared objectives.

## **4. Purpose**

This Equality Action Plan (2021-2026) contributes to Mid Ulster District Council's compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Equality Action plan ('The Plan') outlines how Council will address the key inequalities identified within our District. The Plan has been informed by an Audit of Inequalities carried out in 2020. Themes identified for inclusion in The Plan from the Audit of Inequalities included the following:

- Accessibility of Council Services, Facilities and Events
- Corporate practices
- Participation levels
- Partnership working

These themes remain consistent with the themes identified in the previous Equality Action Plan which was updated in 2017. Council is working to implement its Equality Scheme and to ensure that there are equitable opportunities provided as a direct result of its implementation. This draft Equality Action Plan is designed to support Council to meet its equality requirements and the full implementation of Council's Equality Scheme.

## 1. Action Plan

The tables below set out how the four themes identified by the Audit of Inequalities and how Council will deliver to address each area. Each theme can be addressed in an item by item basis by what the desired of each action will be, how performance will be monitored and who has responsibility for its implementation. A timeframe for its implementation is also included.

### Theme 1: Accessibility of Council Services, Facilities and Events

Key inequalities:

- Provision of alternative formats
- Accessibility of Buildings for People with Dependents
- Accessibility of Events for People with Dependents

Action No	Action	Desired Outcome	Performance Indicator	Responsibility	Timeframe
1a	Improved accessibility of Council information in alternative formats	Ease of accessibility of information	Increase in the number of alternative formats requested and provided	Chief Executive and Directors	2021-2022
1b	Increased accessibility at Council facilities for parents and carers	Accessible and user friendly spaces created for parents and carers within Council facilities	Provision of quiet areas within buildings, baby changing to be installed where it is currently unavailable, family friendly parking spaces	Chief Executive and Directors	2022
1c	Staff Training	Improved awareness. Reduced number of complaints	No. of staff provided with awareness training	Chief Executive and Directors	2021 and thereafter
1d	Elected Members training	Improved awareness and informed decision making	No. of sessions held and No. of participants	Chief Executive and Directors	2021 and thereafter

## Theme 2: Corporate Practices

Key inequality:

- There are opportunities within corporate practices to mainstream improvement of inequalities and track improvement of inequalities

Action No	Action	Desired Outcome	Performance Indicator	Responsibility	Timeframe
2a	Any gaps in monitoring information identified	More robust monitoring arrangements	Monitoring reports examined/reviewed on an annual basis	Chief Executive and Directors	2021-2022
2b	Inclusive delivery of the Corporate Plan	Adherence to the commitment to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.	Policy developed and approved by Council for implementation	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer/ Head of Marketing and Communication	2021-2025
2c	Develop procedural arrangements for translation and interpretation	Clear guidance in relation to translation & interpretive requirements	Procedures developed and approved by Council for implementation	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	2021
2d	Mainstreaming equality of opportunity and Good Relations through service planning and documentation	Improved systems and procedures	No. of Screening Documents completed and examples of mainstreaming developed	Heads of Service and Directors	2021 and thereafter

### Theme 3: Participation Levels

Key inequalities:

- The timing and local of events can create participation barriers for carers
- Older people who are less comfortable and experienced with using online platforms can feel excluded from services that are provided online only.

<b>Action No</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
3a	Explore the timing of events/courses	Create Equality of Opportunity for carers	Samples taken of the timing of various events/guidance developed	Heads of Service	2021 and thereafter
3b	Location of activities	Creates Equality of Opportunity for all locations across the District	Samples taken of the timing of various events/ guidance developed	Heads of Service	2021 and thereafter
3c	Provide a digital first but not digital only approach to service delivery	Older people feel excluded from services that are moved to online	Number of alternatives provided	Directors	2021 and thereafter
3d	Increased skills development opportunities	Opportunity to develop skills set and address any gap in skills	No of carers employed by Council	Director of Organisational Development	2022

## Theme 4: Partnership Working

Key inequalities:

- Partnership working between Council and Community & Voluntary support organisations how place a focus on Health and Wellbeing and Good Relations

Action No	Action	Desired Outcome	Performance Indicator	Responsibility	Timeframe
4a	Explore partnership working opportunities that place a focus on Health and Wellbeing of S75 group	Increased opportunities for partnership working between Council and relevant C&V organisations	No. of joint partnership projects being delivered	Heads of Service	2021-2026
4b	Explore partnership working opportunities that place a focus on Good Relations	Increased opportunities for partnership working between Council and relevant C&V organisations	No. of joint partnership projects being delivered	Heads of Service	2021-2026



## **5. Review and Evaluation**

This action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and progress will be monitored and reported upon within Council's annual submission to the Equality Commission.

## **6. Conclusion**

The implementation of this action plan will support the overall implementation of the Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan and the mainstreaming of equality throughout the organisation. This plan will be re-examined as priorities emerge following the commencement of the implementation of our community plan.