



Midlothian

Equality Plan

2017-2021



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Introduction

Midlothian Council, Education Authority & Licensing Board believes that equality is a fundamental right that everyone should have. No one should be denied opportunities because of who they are and everyone should be able to be themselves. This principle must underpin all of the work that the Council, Education Authority & Licensing Board does. To put this into practice, we need to:

- recognise that some people are not always treated fairly and can experience discrimination and inequality;
- ensure our services meet the needs of people in our communities and that communities have choice and control over the services they use where appropriate;
- challenge ourselves to tackle the inequality that exists in our communities and work together with our partners to improve outcomes for equality groups; and
- tackle prejudice and negative attitudes towards people and celebrate the diversity within our community.

Midlothian has changed significantly in recent years. The county continues to have growing population as well as large numbers of young people and a growing elderly population. In Midlothian we have also welcomed new communities including Syrian refugee families, and the needs of existing communities continue to become increasingly diverse. At the same time, the Council's budget is under pressure and the need to reduce costs and modernise the way we deliver our services has never been more important.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 brings new requirements for the Council and its partners to work with the community and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate in local decision making. The Midlothian Community Planning Partnership has reminded us all of the negative impact of poverty on individuals and communities, and the need to work together to tackle inequality.

This plan sets out our commitment to tackling inequality and promoting inclusion. We believe that we need to lead the way in planning and delivering services which meet the needs of our diverse communities and respond to the changes ahead. We also must strive to be a good workplace for all our employees and to promote positive work experiences for our young workforce.

We look forward to supporting equality in all aspects of the Council, Education Authority & Licensing Board's work and employment practices and to reporting the progress we make to you over the coming years.

Kenneth Lawrie, Chief Executive & Councillor Derek Milligan, Council Leader

Section 1: Why we developed an Equality Plan

The Importance of Tackling Poverty and Promoting Equality and Inclusion

'An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish. An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be.' UK Equalities Review 2007

This definition of equality captures three aspects of equality:

Opportunity - whether everyone really has the same chance to reach their potential

Agency - what degree of choice and control an individual has in taking part

Process – whether discrimination (or the way we do things) causes or contributes to a particular inequality.

What is the purpose of the Equality Plan?

The purpose of the Equality Plan is to clearly state the Council's commitment to equality and diversity and to demonstrate how we are meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. It also frames this work in the context of the Council and Community Planning Partnership's overarching commitment to make 'Midlothian – a Great Place to Grow', and connects all work which is aimed at reducing the impact of poverty and inequality.

Together with its action plan, the Equality Plan identifies key priorities for achieving improved equality outcomes in a targeted and consistent way across the Council and Community Planning Partnership. The Equality Plan contributes to all aspects of the Midlothian Community Planning Partnership's Single Midlothian Plan 2017-2018 and to the following strategic priorities outlined in the Plan:

- Reducing the gap in learning outcomes
- Reducing the gap in health outcomes
- Reducing the gap in economic circumstances

Midlothian Council through its work on reducing inequality and promoting equality and diversity aims to:

- Continue to lead a culture where respect, choice and understanding is fostered and diversity positively valued;
- Maintain a working environment where unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying is not tolerated;
- Continue to develop our understanding of the needs of different individuals and communities in a time of rapid change;

- Continue to embed the equality agenda in all our work, and contribute to the early intervention and prevention approach adopted by the Council and its Partners;
- Improve understanding of the impact of poverty and inequality on people's lives; and
- Ensure that we plan and deliver services which meet modern standards of delivery and that are inclusive of a wide range of different needs from digital services to face to face interactions

The Council as an **Education Authority** also needs to meet the requirements of the Equality Act, including the specific duties. The Council also administers the **Licensing Board** and needs to meet the requirements of the Act when undertaking its duties in this regard. The commitments of these bodies are also contained in this Plan.

Through this work, we will meet our legal obligations to remove disadvantage, advance equality of opportunity and promote good relations with various groups. The Plan also aims to develop our work on all protected characteristics. It furthers work of previous equality schemes, reports and action plans.

The Equality Act 2010

The purpose of the Equality Act is to ensure that everyone, whether at work or in using a service has the right to be treated fairly. It protects people from discrimination on the basis of certain characteristics. These are known as protected characteristics and they vary slightly according to whether a person is at work or using a service.

During the course of 2017, the Scottish Government intend to enact a further requirement on public sector bodies to consider 'socio economic status' alongside the protected characteristics outlined below.

At this time (April 2017), further information is not yet available about the scope of this new requirement. This plan will be updated as appropriate following issue of guidance on socio economic status.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership (the law provides protection in the area of employment and vocational training only)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and Belief

- Sexual Orientation
- Sex (formerly known as gender)

What is Discrimination?

Discrimination comes in different forms. It can be:

- **Direct** when someone's gender, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, age, disability or being transgender is used as an explicit reason for treating them differently. This is the kind of discrimination that people often recognise easily.

An example might be where a community learning and development worker refuses to work with someone because they are gay.

- **Indirect** when there are rules, services or ways of doing things that have the effect of discriminating against certain groups

For example, the venue you choose for a local event or training might not be accessible to everyone with a disability.

This kind of discrimination is more subtle and can be harder to spot. It often results from simply not understanding or thinking about the needs of certain groups.

- Treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability when this cannot be justified (known as **discrimination arising from disability**).
- Failing to make **reasonable adjustments** for disabled people e.g. making a hearing loop available at meetings where you know people will be using hearing aids.
- **Discrimination by association** occurs when someone is discriminated against because of their association with someone protected by the Equality Act.

An example might be a Bed and Breakfast refusing a block booking for your group because one of the couples is gay. This would be direct discrimination against the gay couple. It would also be discrimination against you by association.

- **Discrimination by perception** allows someone to claim discrimination even if they do not have the protected characteristic, An example would be an atheist bullied at a football match for being catholic can claim discrimination even though he is not catholic.
- It is important to remember that some people experience discrimination on several grounds – this is sometimes called **multiple discrimination**.

The law also protects against:

- **Harassment** is when an individual is subjected to unwanted conduct which has the intent or effect or violating someone's dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

An example of this would be when a person has made inappropriate sexual comments about a colleagues clothing.

- **Victimisation** is where an individual has sought to enforce their rights, or helped another to do so, and as a result is treated less favourably than others who have not complained.

An example of this would be when a person is excluded from a social work/ work event because they have complained about the conduct of a colleague.

What responsibilities does Midlothian Council have under the Act?

As a local authority, Midlothian Council is required to implement the Public Sector Equality Duty in addition to the provisions relating to employment, education and training. This is comprised of two elements, the general duty and the specific duty.

The general duty was developed for public bodies recognising the significant impact that the delivery of public services has on people's lives. The general duty is designed to ensure that, if followed, services are designed to meet the diverse needs of the community and also builds inclusive services. The three general duties are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The **specific duty** is designed to help authorities to put the general duty into practice. It includes a requirement for the authority to:

- Report on mainstreaming the equality duty
- Publish equality outcomes and report progress
- Assess and review policies and practices
- Gather and use employee information
- Publish gender pay gap information

- Publish statements on equal pay
- Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement
- Publish in a manner that is accessible

Section 2: How we developed the Equality Plan

Outcomes are the consequences of the actions that we undertake; things that make a difference to the lives of people.

This Equality Plan builds on the previous Equality Outcome and Mainstreaming Report 2013 – 2017 and Single Midlothian Plans 2015, 2016 and 2017 all of which were developed after a series of consultations with local groups and individuals. These outcomes continue to reflect the needs of our communities, and reflect ongoing work to achieve positive outcomes for individuals and communities across the county.

To inform our outcomes we continue to:

- engage with people with protected characteristics;
- engage with voluntary and third sector organisations that work with equalities groups;
- consider feedback from consultation on the existing equality objectives;
- consider equality issues raised by members of staff and the community previously;
- look at what existing service areas are doing about equality;
- look at external factors which will impact on local people and the way in which the Council delivers services; and
- consult on a draft set of equality outcomes

Factors influencing the new Equality Plan

Midlothian continues to grow and change. There are many factors which influence people's individual circumstances and their life experiences. In developing this plan, the following are some of the factors we have considered:

- 1) Welfare Reform;
- 2) Findings of the Midlothian Community Planning Partnership;
- 3) Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015;
- 4) Gender based Violence;
- 5) Welcoming of Syrian Refugee families;
- 6) Increasing diversity across our population, especially from Eastern Europe;
- 7) Local Development Plan;
- 8) City Deal;

- 9) Living Wage;
- 10) Focus on Digital Services;
- 11) Wider Council Transformation Programme; and
- 12) Brexit and potential implications for Equality and Human Rights legislation arising from the exit of the EU.

Local communities across Midlothian remain active in highlighting equality and inclusion issues that are affecting their lives. These include:

- 1) LGBT equality in local schools and communities;
- 2) Sex (Gender) Equality issues, including domestic abuse, female representation on boards, maternity leave and mental health for new parents;
- 3) The impact of Poverty- particularly on women and children, including access to sanitary products;
- 4) Understanding the needs of vulnerable families;
- 5) Hate crime experienced by local BME communities, particularly BME business owners, those with physical and learning disability, LGBT hate crime;
- 6) Promoting understanding of mental health, including suicide awareness and prevention;
- 7) Inclusion of children with additional support needs in mainstream services and fun activities;
- 8) Ensuring our services are accessible to all regardless of age, race or disability; and
- 9) Requests for meeting spaces to meet religious needs during special religious periods

For our services, emerging issues include:

- 1) Supporting services including schools, housing services and care homes to consider transgender equality, and ensure a positive experience for those who need services;
- 2) Continuing issues of high levels of sex (gender) based violence, including emerging issues of GBV in dementia households;
- 3) Facilitating interpretation and translation services across a broader range of services, including British Sign Language;
- 3) Dealing with concerns about racism and victimisation in the community;

- 4) Dealing with service users in distress as a result of the impact of welfare reform including expressing suicidal thoughts;
- 5) Supporting sports clubs to consider equality and inclusion and encouraging them to think about these issues differently;
- 6) Supporting those providing Early Years services to think about inclusive play and the importance of equality in early years;
- 7) Meeting the needs of Syrian refugee families; and
- 8) Increasing demand for emergency food provision and continually increasing numbers being referred to local foodbanks

Equality Evidence Review

- Midlothian Council employees: Of the total Council workforce in 2015/16, 71.8% are female, and 28.2% are male.
- There are unacceptably high instance of Violence against Women in Midlothian. 1,102 incidents of domestic abuse were reported in Midlothian in 2015/2016 and we know that many more go unreported. The impact of domestic abuse on women and children is devastating and can be long lasting. It is recognised that men are also affected by domestic abuse and that it is also present in same sex relationships.
- Reported hate crime has increased in recent years in Midlothian. Victims of racist hate crime are often repeat victims as they work in public facing jobs in the retail and catering industries. Disability and other forms of Hate Crime remains underreported across Midlothian
- The ability to 'be you' and feel respected in the community has a big impact on an individual's mental health and wellbeing and also their sense of community. Midlothian social attitudes show that prejudice and negative attitudes towards equality groups remain a problem in our communities.
- We need to recognise that different people have different needs when accessing and using our services. All services need to take account of equality in designing, developing and implementing their services.
- Life expectancy varies between the most affluent and the most deprived areas of the county. This highlights that although we are living longer healthier lives, some groups in the community are not benefiting equally from improvements in health.

Building on existing work

The Council has been working to meet the requirements of previous equalities legislation for a number of years and has developed good practice and skills arising from this work. The Council also works within a complex legislative requirements and provides a range of services for vulnerable people as required. For more information about previous equality work and examples of good practice, please read our 'Mainstreaming Equality Reports'. These are available on our website.

Section 3: Delivering Equality in Midlothian

How can we advance Equality of Opportunity?

As a service provider Midlothian Council plays a significant role in people's lives. We need to ensure that our services are accessible to all those who need them and demonstrate that we have considered the diverse needs of the community when developing them. We can do this by:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people who share a relevant protected characteristic that arise from them having that characteristic;
- taking steps to meet the needs of people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of those who do not share it; and
- encouraging individuals or groups who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which their participation is disproportionately low

Outcomes are the consequences of the actions that we undertake, things that make a difference to the lives of people. Midlothian Council has set the following equality outcomes to work towards. These outcomes reflect the work that is being undertaken to mainstream equality into all areas of the Council's work and the work we do in partnership with others. Therefore the outcomes are similar, and in some cases the same as the outcomes contained in the Council's Single Midlothian Plan 2017 – 2018.

Midlothian Council Equality Outcomes 2017-2021

1. Midlothian Council is a positive workplace for all employees

- Midlothian Council is a workplace free of harassment, discrimination and victimisation
- Midlothian Council will continue to work to eliminate any gender pay gap between employees
- Midlothian Council will have a range of flexible working policies in line with business need.
- Midlothian Council will have a range of opportunities for employees to develop successful career paths
- Midlothian Council will develop opportunities for young people

2. All of Midlothian's young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens

- Close the gap in literacy rates between boys and girls in primary school and SIMD areas
- Reduced incidence of identity based bullying in youth settings e.g. homophobia
- All children are ready to start primary school

3. In Midlothian we live healthier, more active and independent lives

- See Midlothian Health & Social Care Partnership Equality Outcomes 2016 – 2018 on www.midlothian.gov.uk

4. Everyone in Midlothian has access to quality sustainable housing

- People with particular needs are able to get and sustain their choice of housing, including independent living
- Increase housing supply and improve access to housing, including affordable housing

5. Fewer people are the victim of crime, disorder and abuse in Midlothian

- Improved levels of safety for women and children experiencing domestic abuse
- Reduced incidence of hate crime
- Increased confidence in reporting hate crime
- Midlothian Licensing Board will work with license holders and other Council services to support positive behaviour on and around license premises

6. Midlothian has strong, vibrant communities where residents have a sense of belonging

- Midlothian equalities communities can meet to celebrate or raise awareness of cultural heritage or specific issues affecting them
- Midlothian Communities are well informed and can influence decisions that matter in their local areas

7. Fewer people experience poverty in Midlothian

- People will be supported out of poverty and welfare dependency

8. Midlothian Council services will meet the needs of all those in the community

- Equality is taken into account when planning and designing services and when making decisions
- Midlothian Council has increased knowledge and capacity about equality, diversity and poverty
- Midlothian Council Procurement Practices ensure equality is a core part of the tendering process
- Midlothian Council is meeting its responsibilities and duties under the Equality Act 2010 and subsequent Regulations

Midlothian Council as an Education Authority

Midlothian Council as an Education Authority is founded on inclusive values, and seeks to provide a wide range of high quality services to all, while giving priority to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and groups in our communities.

The Education Authority continues to strive to make a positive difference to the lives of children, young people and their families. The Council/Education Authority recognises the individuality and diverse needs of all children, young people and their families.

Curriculum for Excellence

The Curriculum for Excellence is a new way of looking at the curriculum that builds on best existing practices in Scottish education. It is a continuing process to encourage more learning through experiences to best ensure that children and young people are prepared for the complex world they will be living in when they leave school. Children and young people are at the centre of learning provision. Our aspiration is that they should all develop the four capacities to become:

- successful learners
- confident individuals
- responsible citizens
- effective contributors

To achieve these we follow key principles to underpin the development of policies and procedures for meeting the needs of all pupils:

- all children and young people residing in Midlothian will have access to educational and social opportunities of the highest quality
- the individuality and diverse needs of all children and young people will be recognised and met where possible
- positive partnerships with parents, children and young people will be established to enable the sharing of common aims, views and aspirations
- collaborative working with other agencies and networking of services will be a requirement

Our long term outcome is that 'All of Midlothian's young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens'.

Key actions will include:

- Developing new ways of working to improve and promote positive mental wellbeing with children and young people across Midlothian

- Establishing a baseline of level of engagement with children and young people in planning for their needs
- Closing the attainment gap affecting children and young people facing additional barriers to learning
- Delivering national improvement actions set by the Scottish government
- Closing the attainment gap for children and young people affected by additional barriers to learning

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

The Midlothian Council Education Authority will use the Integrated Impact Assessment Tool that has been developed by Midlothian Council. All reports presented to the Council committees proposing new policies or guidelines setting out new functions, or proposing any other changes with implications for equality strands will include details of the results of the impact assessment.

Publication

Information about all Education functions, including a copy of this Plan, Annual Reports and results of impact assessments will be published on the Council website and Edubuzz.

Midlothian Council: Licensing Board

The Midlothian Licensing Board is constituted in terms of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Gambling Act 2005. The regimes under these Acts set out broad aims which the Board must and will support in all its functions. The pursuit of these aims is a principal feature of this Board's statement of policy. A copy of the Board's Statement of Licensing Policy can be viewed https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200269/licences_and_permits/404/licensing_board

The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005:

- Preventing crime and disorder;
- Securing public safety;
- Preventing public nuisance;
- Protecting and improving public health ; and
- Protecting children from harm

The Gambling Act 2005:

- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime and disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime
- Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way
- Protecting children and other vulnerable young persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

Our Outcomes

In all the Licensing Boards' work we will contribute to the long term outcome:

'Fewer people are the victim of crime, disorder and abuse in Midlothian'.

Our short term priorities include:

- Developing the Licensing Application process to ensure fair access, including the development of electronic applications
- Licensing Board works in partnership with a range of stakeholders to ensure the most effective decisions are made to meet the aims of the Board
- Licensing Board works with license holders and other Council services to support positive behaviour on and around license premises.

Gathering Information

The Licensing Board works with a range of partners to ensure that they have the appropriate information they need to make the right decisions about applications presented. Key partners include police, health and fire services, anti-social behaviour team, community councils, child protection teams and any other relevant

stakeholders. Where relevant this can include information about equalities issues and experiences of equality groups in the community.

Integrated Impact Assessment

The Midlothian Licensing Board will use the Integrated Impact Assessment Tool that has been developed by Midlothian Council. All reports presented to the Board proposing new policies or guidelines setting out new functions, or proposing any other changes with implications for equality strands will include details of the results of the impact assessment.

Publication

Information about all Licensing functions, including a copy of this Plan, Annual Reports and results of impact assessments will be published on this page https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200269/licences_and_permits/404/licensing_board

Midlothian Council as an Employer

The Council's vision is that 'Midlothian is a Great Place to Grow'. Delivering quality services needed by the residents of Midlothian is fundamental to the Council and its People Strategy. The five key values identified within the strategy are:

- Celebrate
- Respect
- Excellence
- Support
- Together

Key areas of work include:

- Implementing Equal Pay
- Equality in recruitment and selection
- Conditions of service
- Prevention of harassment
- Employee development

Fundamental to achieving this goal is equality of employment opportunities and the Council strives to ensure that equal opportunities underpin all aspects of employment and employment policies.

Equal Pay

Midlothian Council is committed to the principle of equal pay for all our employees. This is outlined in the Council's Equal Pay Statement. The Council implemented the national Single Status Agreement at a local level, and this saw the introduction of a new pay and grade structure for all affected Local Government Employees. Craft workers, teachers and Chief Officer's pay are generally regulated by national conditions of service

Living wage

Midlothian Council agreed to introduce the Scottish Government's 'Living Wage' structure. The introduction of the living wage will particularly benefit women who are more highly represented in lower paid and part time jobs.

The Council supports a range of work that supports the equalities agenda including:

- A comprehensive Employee Assistance programme
- Use of the Two Ticks symbol
- Participation in the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme
- Taking the See Me campaign pledge
- Healthy Working Lives

Our Employment Outcome:

Our long term outcome is that 'Midlothian Council is a positive workplace for all employees'

- Midlothian Council will be a workplace free of harassment, discrimination and victimisation
- Midlothian Council will continue to work to eliminate any pay gap between employees on the grounds of disability, gender or race
- Midlothian Council will have a range of flexible employment practices in line with business need
- Midlothian Council will have a range of opportunities for employees to develop successful career paths
- Midlothian Council will develop opportunities for young people

Mainstreaming Equality

'Mainstreaming equality' means taking equality into account in the way Midlothian Council undertakes its day to day functions. In practice this means that we think about equality as a core part of everything that we do from our employment practices to the services we plan and provide.

Mainstreaming equality has a number of benefits including:

- Embedding equality into the culture of the Council and influencing our attitudes and behaviours;
- Allowing the Council to demonstrate how we are meeting our legal obligations to promote equality; and
- Allowing us to continually improve our performance and the services we plan and provide.

Key ways we can help to ensure we consider equality as part of everything we plan and do:

1. Ensuring high level commitment to Equality through all levels of the Council structures and planning procedures.
2. Understanding the impact of our work
3. Gathering information about the experiences of equality groups
4. Building organisational capacity
5. Ensuring that those who provide services on our part consider equality
6. Working in partnership with others.

Detailed information about how the Council has mainstreamed equality can be found in the Mainstreaming Equality Reports that can be accessed at www.midlothian.gov.uk

1. Ensuring high level commitment to Equality through all levels of the Council structures and planning procedures.

- **Service Planning and Performance**

The service planning structure at Midlothian Council includes the Single Midlothian Plan, the local outcomes improvement plan for Midlothian and Service Business Plans. Each of these plans makes a contribution to achieving the Council's desired outcomes. A strong commitment to equal opportunities is made at each level of the Planning process. Guidance developed for each stage of the planning process includes guidance on how to include equality.

Single Midlothian Plan (the local outcome improvement plan for Midlothian)



Business Plans (including Service Plans, Unit Plans and Teams Plans)

2. Understanding the Impact of our work

- **Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)**

Midlothian Council in partnership with East Lothian Council and NHS Lothian has developed an 'Integrated Impact Assessment Tool' to allow us to examine the impact of our decisions on the community. The tool brings together key social, environmental and economic priorities to highlight whether the decisions we make or the plans we put in place will have a positive, neutral or negative impact in the community. The process also helps the Council to be more transparent and accountable for the decisions we make.

Midlothian Council requires all reports to the Council committees to include the findings of the Integrated Impact Assessment where proportionate and relevant.

Integrated Impact Assessments are published on the Council's website

www.midlothian.gov.uk

- **Equalities Monitoring**

Equalities 'Monitoring', means gathering and analysing information on the personal characteristics of our service users. Gathering information about our service users helps us to understand the profile of our community, who is and who isn't using our services and what people think of them.

Equalities monitoring allows us to establish:

- The nature or extent of inequality
- The areas where action is most needed to encounter inequality
- Whether or not measures aimed at reducing inequality are succeeding

Midlothian Council is currently developing 'A Guide to Monitoring Equalities in Council Services' in order to provide clear guidance on how to monitor equalities effectively in service areas.

- **Reporting on equalities performance**

The Council has developed a series of performance indicators which relate to equalities. These comprise both statutory performance indicators and indicators gathered through the Single Midlothian Plan, the local outcomes improvement plan for Midlothian.

Key Performance Indicators (including the Statutory Performance Indicators) are published on the Council's performance website and can be accessed [here](#).

The Key Performance Indicators are reported to the Policy & Performance Review Committee for scrutiny by the Elected Members. Performance reports are also analysed by the Council Management Team. Indicators relating to equalities are reported in relation to several outcomes.

3. Gathering Information about the experiences of equality groups

Midlothian Council recognises that gathering evidence about the needs and experiences of those with protected characteristics is an important way for us to plan and deliver services that meet the needs of the community. Further, having this information also helps us to assess the impact of proposed and revised policies.

We seek to:

- Identify what issues people in local communities are facing which might be stopping them from accessing our services or making it harder for them to access our services
- Learn more about the diverse experiences of people in the community
- Build trust and improve communication with harder to reach communities
- Understand which issues are within the remit of the Council to address, together with our partners where relevant.

The Council does this in a number of ways including community engagement, research and working in partnership with other specialist organisations.

- **Community Engagement**

The Council routinely engages with a range of local equality groups to gather information about their experiences. Examples include:

- Midlothian Peoples Equality Group (MPEG)
- Citizens Panel
- Midlothian Young Peoples Advice Service (MYPAS)
- Midlothian LGBT Youth Group

The Council also has a dedicated Community Engagement Officer, and active Community Councils that are encouraged to be inclusive in the ways that they work.

4. Building Organisational Capacity

- **Equality Training**

Equality and diversity training is a key way forward for all employees to understand more about the meaning and importance of equality and diversity, and the impact of prejudice and discrimination. By March 2013 96% of all staff had attended or completed online equality and diversity awareness training, and to this day such training forms part of the new staff induction process. Awareness training has also been rolled out to Elected Members and the Council's Management Team. The Council now intends to develop an Equality Training Plan. The aims of this Equality Training Plan will be to:

- ensure that Midlothian Council is able to meet its general and specific duties under equalities and human rights legislation;
- provide employees with opportunities for learning and awareness of their role and responsibilities under Equality and Human Rights legislation; and
- develop a skilled, motivated and culturally capable workforce that can bring about changes that will improve services and tackle inequalities

Key aspects of the training plan will include:

- Training and development for Elected Members;
- Bespoke training opportunities , including inter-agency training;
- E-Learning;
- Equality Guides and Online Resources; and
- Individual Support and Guidance

5. Ensure that those who provide services on our behalf also consider equality

Midlothian Council strives to ensure that all duties under the Equality Act will be integral to the procurement process. The Council's current Corporate Procurement Strategy contains clauses to ensure the equality of opportunity in relation to service provision and employment. The Council also actively supports the use of Article 19 (regulation 7) and is actively working to ensure that at least some Council contracts are with supported businesses.

6. Work in partnership with others- The Midlothian Community Planning Partnership

The Midlothian Community Planning Partnership's Single Midlothian Plan 2017 – 18 which is the local outcomes improvement plan for Midlothian has equality underpinning all its outcomes and actions.

For more information on the Single Midlothian Plan 2017 – 18 and previous plans, please visit [here](#).

Fostering Good Relations

The requirement of the Equality Act is to foster good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. There are two significant components to this work:

- tackling prejudice
- promoting understanding

Midlothian has strong and active communities with high levels of satisfaction about the places people live reported through local resident's surveys. However, despite a positive picture we are aware that there are pockets within our communities where tensions exist. Midlothian's population is changing and across the country we have seen a growth in support for far right political parties, increasing concerns about immigration, incidents of hate crime and global terrorist incidents. This highlights the importance of working towards community cohesion and it challenges us to build consideration about how our work can help to foster good relations in all aspects of our work.

We have included 'promotes good relations' as a core policy theme within our new Integrated Impact Assessment process to help us ensure we maximise our awareness of this area of work.

Section 4: Midlothian Equality in Action

You can find out more information about equalities work in Midlothian by visiting our engagement page [here](#).

Contact us

You can get in touch with us by:

- **Email:** equalities@midlothian.gov.uk
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Draft Equality Action Plan for Midlothian Council, Midlothian Education Authority & Midlothian Licensing Board

2017 – 2021

Section Outcome/Working Equality Outcomes	Actions	Timescale	Indicator	Equality Protected Characteristic
1. Midlothian Council is a positive workplace for all employees				
Midlothian Council is a workplace free of discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Develop Equality in Employment Action Plan to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-based Violence Workplace Policy • Disability Confident Scheme • Healthy Workplace • Stonewall Champions • Living Wage • Gender Pay Gap • Employee Monitoring • Mental Health Strategy • Updating HR policies 	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All

Section Outcome/Working Equality Outcomes	Actions	Timescale	Indicator	Equality Protected Characteristic
Midlothian Council will continue to work to eliminate any pay gap between employees on the grounds of disability, gender or race	Revise and continue to implement the Equal Pay Statement to include gender, race and disability	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability • Gender • Race
Midlothian Council will have a range of flexible working policies in line with business need	Further development of flexible working options	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All
Midlothian Council will have a range of opportunities for employees to develop successful career paths	Under development	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All

Section Outcome/Working Equality Outcomes	Actions	Timescale	Indicator	Equality Protected Characteristic
Midlothian Council will develop opportunities for young people	Under development	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All
2. All of Midlothian's young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens				
Close the gap in literacy rates between boys and girls in primary school and SIMD areas	Under development	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • LAC
Reduced incidence of identity based bullying in youth settings e.g. homophobia	Under development	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability • Gender re-assignment • Pregnancy & maternity • Race

Section Outcome/Working Equality Outcomes	Actions	Timescale	Indicator	Equality Protected Characteristic
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion or belief • Sex • Sexual orientation
All children are ready to start primary school	Under development	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability • Gender re-assignment • Race • Religion or belief • Sex
3. In Midlothian we live healthier, more active and independent lives				
See Midlothian Health & Social Care Partnership Equality Outcomes 2016 – 2018 on www.midlothian.gov.uk		2016 - 2018		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All

Section Outcome/Working Equality Outcomes	Actions	Timescale	Indicator	Equality Protected Characteristic
4. Everyone in Midlothian has access to quality sustainable housing				
In Midlothian people with particular needs are able to get and sustain their choice of housing including independent living	Under development	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability • Sex
In Midlothian there will be increased housing supply and improved access to housing including affordable housing	Under development	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All

Section Outcome/Working Equality Outcomes	Actions	Timescale	Indicator	Equality Protected Characteristic
5. Fewer people are the victim of crime, disorder and abuse in Midlothian				
Improved levels of safety for women and children experiencing domestic abuse	Under development	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All
Reduced incidence of hate crime	Under development	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability • Gender re-assignment • Race • Religion or belief • Sexual orientation
Increased confidence in reporting hate crime	Under development	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All

Section Outcome/Working Equality Outcomes	Actions	Timescale	Indicator	Equality Protected Characteristic
<p>Midlothian Licensing Board will work with license holders and other Council services to support positive behaviour on and around license premises</p>	<p>Developing the Licensing Application process to ensure fair access, including the development of electronic applications</p> <p>Licensing Board works in partnership with a range of stakeholders to ensure the most effective decisions are made to meet the aims of the Board</p> <p>Licensing Board works with license holders and other Council services to support positive behaviour on and around license premises.</p>			

Section Outcome/Working Equality Outcomes	Actions	Timescale	Indicator	Equality Protected Characteristic
6. Midlothian has strong, vibrant communities where residents have a sense of belonging				
Midlothian equalities communities can meet to celebrate or raise awareness of cultural heritage or specific issues affecting them	<p>Revise methods/ways of engagement</p> <p>Address gaps in current methods of engagement</p> <p>Provide opportunities to equality groups to participate in areas arising from the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015</p>	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All
Midlothian Communities are well informed and can influence decisions that matter in their local areas	Under development	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All

Section Outcome/Working Equality Outcomes	Actions	Timescale	Indicator	Equality Protected Characteristic
7. Fewer people experience poverty in Midlothian				
People will be supported out of poverty and welfare dependency	Under development	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All
8. Midlothian Council services will meet the needs of all those in the community				
Equality is taken into account when planning and designing services and when making decisions	Integrated Impact Assessments Equalities monitoring Engage with equality groups in service re-design and decision making when relevant	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All

Section Outcome/Working Equality Outcomes	Actions	Timescale	Indicator	Equality Protected Characteristic
	and appropriate			
Midlothian Council has increased knowledge and capacity about equality, diversity and poverty	Under development	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All
Midlothian Council Procurement Practices ensure equality is a core part of the tendering process	Under development	2017 - 2021	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All
Midlothian Council is meeting its responsibilities and duties under the Equality Act 2010 and subsequent Regulations	Compliance-plus with the Equality Act 2010 and subsequent Regulations 2012, 2015 & 2016	2017 - 2021	Progress Reports in 2019 & 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All