



Committed to equality of opportunity in employment and services

The County Council is firmly committed to the principle of equal opportunities in both the delivery of services and employment. Equality of opportunity means that service users, job seekers and employees will be treated equally and fairly regardless of their colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, marital status, sexuality, disability, age or any other unjustifiable criterion. The County Council seeks to create an environment in which services and employment are provided without fear of discrimination.

The County Council is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and harassment of any kind. Through joint ventures the County Council seeks to increase its efforts to deal firmly with instances of discrimination and harassment, including racial abuse and attacks, wherever they occur.

The County Council has the responsibility for establishing an Equal Opportunities Policy and the Chief Executive is responsible for its implementation throughout the Authority. The associated Guide to Good Practice in Employment sets out the action required to implement it in this particular area of activity.

In employment, the County Council is committed to achieving and maintaining a workforce which broadly reflects the local community which it serves.

Delivery of Services

County Council services are available and accessible to members of the public regardless of any of the considerations mentioned above.

All managers have a responsibility for implementing the Equal Opportunities Policy. Chief Officers ensure that it is implemented and monitored within their departments and throughout the services within their span of control.

The County Council will seek to encourage good practice by contractors. Before awarding major contracts, enquiries are made of potential contractors about their race relations policies and practices. The contract documents contain terms requiring contractors to comply with their statutory obligations and to observe good race relations practices.

Voluntary organisations grant aided by the County Council are required to provide on request details of their equal opportunities policies and practices in respect of employment and service delivery. Members of the public, including job seekers, who consider they have been unfairly treated under this Equal Opportunities Policy may use the County Council's complaints procedure. All complaints will be dealt with promptly and courteously.

Employment

The Guide to Good Practice in employment gives practical guidance on recruitment and selection, monitoring, action plans, equality targets, equality training, employee development, redeployment and redundancy.

All recruitment decisions are made regardless of any of the considerations mentioned above, apart from the few exceptions which are permitted by law. Support is available for people with disabilities.

All employees have equal access to training and career development regardless of any of the considerations mentioned above. The training needs of particular groups of employees who are under-represented in specific occupations and management posts will receive positive attention.

Comprehensive monitoring of the workforce and job applicants is carried out by reference to the information they choose to disclose about their ethnic origin, gender and any disability. The purpose of monitoring is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Equal Opportunities Policy and related personnel policies and practices.

An employee who has a concern regarding unfair discrimination or harassment at work may use one of the County Council's formal grievance procedures. The use of the internal procedures does not affect an employee's right of reference to an industrial tribunal within the statutory time limits.

Responsibilities of all County Council Employees

The County Council requires all its employees to behave in a non-racist, non-sexist and generally non-discriminatory way. This applies to the way they behave to members of the public in the delivery of services and to other employees in the course of their work. Employees should participate actively in measures introduced by the County Council to ensure that there is equality of opportunity and non-discrimination. Employees should also draw the attention of management to alleged unlawful discriminatory acts or practices. Should employees, through the course of their employment, be found to have caused or encouraged discrimination, this will be regarded as a particularly serious offence, rendering them liable to disciplinary action.

John Sinnott, Chief Executive

Approved by the Resources Committee

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