

Equal Opportunities Policy

**Foreword**

Equality, together with Quality, Access and Partnership, has been a core value of the Trust since its inception in 2013. Our commitment to equality is as strong today as it was then. As a Trust, we place equality at the heart of everything we do and are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and social inclusion for all our service users, visitors and employees.

The Trust’s Equal Opportunities Policy highlights our commitment to maintaining and building on our strengths by ensuring equality and diversity is integral to everything we do.

In serving a diverse population, the Trust aims to ensure there is equality of opportunity for residents, service users, employees, Trustees, stakeholders and partner organisations, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We promote equality of opportunity for our employees and service users and recognise that in society, groups and individuals, continue to be unlawfully discriminated against and we acknowledge our responsibilities to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations within our communities. Our aim in producing this comprehensive policy is to demonstrate our wholehearted commitment to continued action in tackling inequality.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

The Trust is committed to the inter-related values of Quality, Equality, Access and Partnership. This is founded in the belief that the diverse range of talents, skills, experience, cultural and social diversity and perspective found within society should also be reflected within the composition of the Trust’s workforce, its employment practices and procedures, and in the manner it delivers services to the people of East Ayrshire. As the largest leisure provider in the area the Trust recognises that it has a key role to play in tackling discrimination and disadvantage by ensuring that all communities, individuals and groups are treated with dignity and respect.

**“*As an employer and provider of services, the Trust will promote equality of opportunity. No employee, job applicant, customer or recipient of services will receive less favourable treatment than any other on any grounds of race, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origins, disability, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, responsibility for dependents, employment status, address, Trade Union activity or political affiliation. Or be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable*.”**

The Trust has a duty under various legislations to promote equal opportunities and civil rights, including:

[Human Rights Act 1998](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents)

[Employment Act 2002](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/22/contents)

[Scotland Act 1998](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/46/contents)

[Local Government Act 2003](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/26/contents)

[Equality Act 2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents) including the Fairer Scotland Duty

[Community Empowerment Act 2015](https://www.gov.scot/publications/community-empowerment-scotland-act-summary/)

**DEFINITIONS**

Equality is described by the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](https://equalityhumanrights.com/en) as ‘ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, and believing that no one should have poorer life choices because of where, what or whom they were born, or because of other characteristics.

Managing diversity is ‘valuing everyone as an individual’, recognising that a ‘one- size fits all’ approach to managing people does not achieve fairness and equality of opportunity, given that people have different needs, values and beliefs.

Women’s experiences are shaped by their multiple intersecting identities. This means that gender, race, disability, faith, sexual orientation, or gender identity overlap and intersect to determine a woman’s experience. For example, a disabled woman’s experience will differ from a black woman’s experience based on the different intersections of disability and gender or race and gender.

The Trust recognises that forms of sexism are detrimental and are not acceptable and will be taken seriously if reported. Different forms of sexism can manifest in the workplace such as:

* Hostile sexism
  + For example, men being considered superior to women or women trying to control men through manipulation
* Institutional sexism
  + when institutions like the media, healthcare, law enforcement, education, religion, and banking reinforce sexist ideology
* Interpersonal sexism
  + For example, if someone is directly judged for not aligning with gender stereotypes or talks down to someone based on assumptions about their sex or gender
* Internalised sexism
  + When repeatedly exposed to sexist behaviour and language, you may begin to internalise or adopt sexist beliefs about yourself, for example, saying something that fuels gender-based stereotypes

**AIMS OF THE POLICY**

The aims of this policy are to:

* Promote equal opportunity in employment and raise awareness of occupational segregation.
* Promote equality in service provision;
* Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the [Equality Act 2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents) and less favourable treatment in service provision and employment practice;
* Advance equality of opportunity for people who share a protected characteristic or characteristics (i.e. age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation);
* Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
* Ensure supporting employment and service procedures, practices and actions plans are developed and implemented; and
* Ensure appropriate training programmes and professional learning programmes are provided such as the Equally Safe at Work training modules.

The Trust also appreciates that, for the purpose of the [Human Rights Act 1998](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents), it has statutory responsibilities and will act as far as possible and at all times in accordance with the spirit of the Act, respecting the fundamental human rights of all employees, customers and members of the public.

**PRINCIPLES**

The following principles are key to the achievement of the policy aims:

Equality, diversity and human rights must be at the heart of the Trust and everything it does; and all employees should feel valued and respected for who they are and the skills that they bring to work and should, in turn, treat their colleagues with courtesy and respect.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT**

**As an Employer**

The Trust recognises the importance of equality of opportunity in employment for both existing employees and job applicants. The Trust accepts that social, economic and cultural processes disadvantage certain groups and individuals in society and will take positive steps to re-address the situation.

The Trust will ensure that no employees or job applicant will receive less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds relating to race, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origins, disability, age, sex, gender identity, marital status/civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and responsibility for dependents.

The Trust will:

* Aim for fair and equal opportunities in all areas of employment, including recruitment and selection, terms and conditions, retentions, learning and career development.
* Ensure job descriptions and selection criteria are clear and consistent with the relevant [Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/codes-practice).
* Make all reasonable adjustments to facilitate continued employment within the Trust for all disabled employees or employees who become disabled during employment with the Trust.
* Support everyone’s right to safety and dignity at work and will provide learning opportunities for Trustees and employees to make them aware of their role and responsibility to promote and maintain a safe, fair and equitable working environment.
* Build on previous good practice by regularly reviewing our employment policies and documentation by working in partnership with Trade Unions and listening to feedback from employees.
* Publicise employment opportunities, monitor response and encourage application from all sections of the community to help us to develop and maintain a workforce that is more representative of the population served and better able to reach under-represented groups.
* In recruitment and selection, retain selection notes for a period of six months and provide constructive feedback to applicants when requested.
* Ensure that job and person specifications relate to job requirements only.
* Aim to be a family friendly employer by offering:
  + Flexible working hours
  + Shift working
  + Special leave
* Part time working
* Job share
* Dependency leave
* Paternity leave
* Maternity leave
* Adoption/Fostering leave
* Carers’ Leave

The Trust will make concerted efforts to meet all reasonable employee requests to adapt working practice to enable their cultural and religious needs to be met, and build equality-sensitive practice into planning and policy. Maintain awareness of the key festivals for different religious groups and consider how to adapt annual leave policies to offer suitable flexibility.

The Trust recognises that women’s labour market inequality and wider gender inequality are critically linked to violence against women. This is because violence against women is a cause and consequence of gender inequality. Therefore, a key step to preventing violence against women in the workplace is to address women’s workplace inequality.

The Trust will foster a working environment that supports the dignity and respect of all employees and is free from any form of discrimination, bullying, harassment and violence – including gender-based violence and sexual harassment. We will not tolerate gender-based violence or sexual harassment in any form and any employees who experience abuse will be supported.

The Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy will apply to recruitment, selection, promotion, redeployment, training, benefits, procedures, terms and conditions of employment of all employees of the Trust.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN SERVICE PROVISIONS**

Legislation makes it unlawful for anyone who is concerned with the provision of goods, facilities and services to the public or a section of the public to discriminate by refusing or deliberately omitting to provide services. It is also unlawful to discriminate unfairly in the quality or terms of service provision by making it unreasonably difficult or impossible for the recipient to make use of the service.

**ACCESS**

Given that the Trust provides services for all East Ayrshire residents and visitors, it is crucial that every attempt is made to provide equal access to the services for all members of the community and ensure that our buildings are accessible to all. The Trust acknowledges that it is not sufficient to say that services are available to all. Effective methods must be developed to consult local communities and groups about standards of service and types of service provision, communicate the existence of these consultative policies and the resultant services to the community and thereafter obtain feedback on the effectiveness of service provision, reviewing policy as appropriate.

The Trust has developed an e-learning module in relation to Delivering an Accessible Venue, which is available to all employees to ensure that events delivered by the Trust are accessible and inclusive.

**CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS**

East Ayrshire Leisure Trust is committed to delivering the best possible customer experience across all our services and to working with a continuous focus on improvement and development.

To help us achieve this, we have produced a set of quality indicators set against each of our key areas; Our Customers, Our Culture, Accessing Our Services, Our Partnerships and Our Performance.

Within the Accessibility section, we demonstrate that:

* Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion statement ensures we are committed to pro-actively providing safe spaces, promoting and demonstrating equality, diversity and inclusion and challenging any unlawful discrimination of our staff and customers
* We are committed to providing free and fair pricing throughout our service areas
* We are committed to making our website and online information as accessible as possible through our Accessibility Statement https://eastayrshireleisure.com/about-us/accessibility-statement/

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion statement also states we will “Be fair, inclusive and supportive to all customers and visitors in our provision of, and participation in, leisure facilities, events and programmes.”

In addition, the Trust will:

* Ensure that employees delivering services are competent to provide an appropriate and informed response to all service users without unlawful discrimination;
* Build equality and anti-discrimination measures into long term service planning;
* Undertake monitoring to establish the take up of service provision of Trust services and regularly review Trust policies and procedures to ensure continuous improvement;
* On request make information on key services available in a variety of formats and languages and provide translation and interpreting facilities upon as required to ensure our services are accessible to all.

**PROCUREMENT**

In respect of supplies and those contracted to provide goods and services on behalf of the Trust we will:

Require them to comply with statutory obligations under the [Human Rights Act 1998](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents), the [Equality Act 2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents), the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted), and all other relevant legislation**.** The Trust also promotes equality through our actions and we have due regard to whether an award and conditions of contract should include considerations to enable better performance of the public sector equality duty. In addition human rights standards recognise the right of everyone to just and favourable working conditions; in particular fair and equal pay, safe and healthy working conditions and reasonable working hours.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COMMUNITY**

The Trust appreciates that it has a major part to play in the process of influencing organisations, groups and individual’s resident within this area to adopt equal opportunities practices.

The Trust recognises that issues relating to discrimination with regards to age, race, disability, sex, marital and civil partnership, religion/belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender identity requires an all embracing response from local organisations and, accordingly the Trust will form a range of partnerships with the wider community – private and public sector, voluntary organisations and community groups and individuals – in order to achieve elimination of all forms of discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Equally, the Trust will endeavor to ensure that those partners, statutory, voluntary and community organisations with who the Trust relates, will embrace equality of opportunity as a core policy of the organisation and, it would be an expectation of the Trust that they full comply with all appropriate legislation.

Therefore the Trust will:

* Aim to be a model of good practice in its approach to Equal Opportunities and encourage others to do likewise.
* Consult widely and work with others to promote equality of opportunity in all elements of life in the communities that make up East Ayrshire.
* Challenge all forms of negative stereotyping and the use of discriminatory and insulting language and behaviour by promoting positive images in all Trust publications.
* Encourage partners, voluntary and community organisations to adopt the principles of this Equal Opportunities Policy so far as appropriate in each individual case; assist voluntary and community groups to develop policies and practices to ensure that the statutory requirements are met.
* Take prompt action remove offensive, obscene or racist graffiti.
* Acknowledge that racist, homophobic and other hate crime based on discrimination, prejudice or stereotyping is a community safety issue, and as such will act to ensure that this behaviour is addressed appropriately.

The Trust will not tolerate violence against women in any form and will promote Equally Safe at Work, promote campaigns and raise awareness, and encourage our community planning partners to do likewise.

**PARTNERSHIPS**

Partnerships are considered a vital component in the Trust’s drive toward Equal Opportunities. The Trust will work with the partners, statutory and voluntary organisations and the wider community to achieve the systematic elimination of any form of discrimination with a view to achieving a society where all are treated equally, whilst recognising the needs and values of cultural diversity. To that end, the Trust will encourage all organisations with which it has a relationship to adopt principles of equality of opportunity.

The Trust will discuss with appropriate Trade Unions and other interested bodies the objectives, content and implementation of this policy.

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The Equal Opportunities Policy will be one of the Trust’s major priorities and in order to ensure its successful implementation the following system of monitoring and evaluation will be put in place.

In line with good practice and to enable statistical population comparisons, all equality monitoring will be undertaken using the [2022 Census](https://www.ons.gov.uk/census) categories with local adjustments to cover the protected characteristics. The Trust will undertake equal opportunities monitoring in the following areas:

**Employment**

* Recruitment and selection:
* Profile the Trust’s existing workforce;
* Report on the number of employees leaving the organisation and understand their reasons for doing so;
* Report on cases of bullying and harassment, including disability, sexual, racial and homophobic harassment;
* Develop a report and support system for reporting and monitoring of all forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment and gender-based violence;
* Monitor the number of disciplinaries, appeals, complaints and grievances.

**Training**

All employees of the Trust in direct contact with the public or representing the Trust will be given appropriate training to enable them to implement service delivery policies. This training may include, for example, the on-line Equality and Diversity Course or Equally Safe at Work courses (which now form part of the employee Training Matrix).

The Trust will make the contents of this policy and of the Code of Conduct known to all employees and provide training and guidance for managers, supervisors and employees to ensure that they understand their responsibilities both in law and in terms of the policy.

**Service Provision**

Complaints by age, disability, ethnicity/race, gender identity, religious beliefs, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation can be reported on through either the individual service, or through the complaints procedure which are available via the website at <https://eastayrshireleisure.com/about-us/complaints/>

Complaints can be made by telephone, in writing, by e-mail or verbally by person. Translation and interpretation can be arranged on request.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Trust will treat the information provided for the purpose of Equal Opportunities monitoring as confidential and will not share or permit access to personal information relating to an individual in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Electronic Communications Act 2000.

The Trust will use equality monitoring statistics to:

- assess compliance with this Policy and achievement of overall aims;

- assess progress of agreed actions to ensure continuous improvement;

- identify areas where further action is required; and

- respond to performance indicators.

**REPORTING MECHANISMS**

To report on any of the issues covered in this policy the following should be undertaken:

**Employment Issues**

If your concern relates to recruitment and selection or is related to your employment you should speak to your Line Manager or Strategic Lead in the first instance, alternatively your Executive Lead will look into the issues for you. If you are a member of a Trade Union they also may be a valuable source of help and advice.

Employees are able to make disclosures about discrimination and harassment so that problems can be identified and resolved quickly within the Trust and there are internal procedures for facilitating this process.

Discrimination and instances of harassment, bullying or abuse will not be tolerated and will be considered a very serious offence that may result in formal action being taken. Such an offence could lead to summary dismissal after a fair investigation and hearing.

Reference should be made to the following documents for further information:

* Code of Conduct for Employees
* Dignity at Work Policy
* Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
* Grievance Policy and Procedures
* Whistleblowing Policy

**Service and non-employment issues**

If you feel that you have been unfairly treated, or have experienced difficulty in accessing or using the services we provide then please let us know. We are always pleased to receive feedback, which plays an important part in the future development of our services. The Trust has its own [Complaints Handling Procedure Protocol](https://leisurenet/media/1486/complaints-handling-procedure.doc) to promote consistency and fairness in our approach.

**REVIEW**

The policy will be reviewed every 2 years or earlier following any changes in relevant legislation or organisational requirement.

**Record of Change**

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| **Date Reviewed** |
| February 2024 |