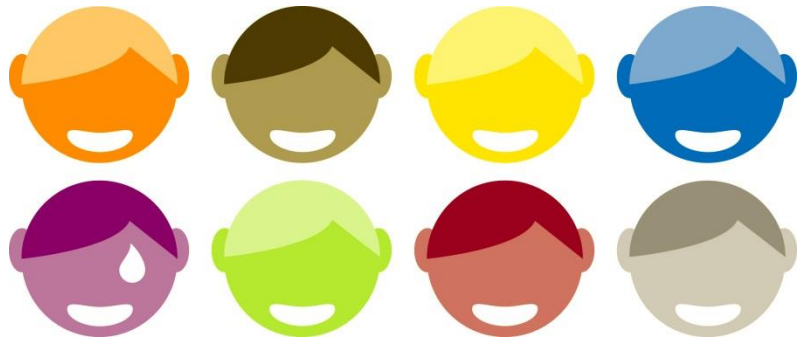




THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL: SUMMARY OF EQUALITY OUTCOMES



May 2021

Working towards a Fairer Highland: Summary of Equality Outcomes 2021-2025

The Highland Council, Highland Education Authority and Highland Licensing Board have revised their Equality Outcomes for the period 2021 - 2025. Over time, these outcomes aim to make a positive contribution to a fairer, more inclusive Highland.

The Highland Council: Summary of Equality outcomes

WORKING TOWARDS A FAIRER HIGHLAND

“An equal society recognises people’s different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be.”

'The Equalities Review', Communities and Local Government, 2007

Introduction

An equal society is one where people can live free from discrimination, their human rights are promoted and protected, and there is an understanding that:

- equality is an issue for us all,
- we don't all start from the same place, and
- to create a fairer society, we need to recognise different needs.

Much has already been achieved but we need to make sure that we continue to improve our work on equality matters.

The Equality Outcomes for the Highland Council, the Highland Education Authority and the Highland Licensing Board support the aims that in Highland:

- People are, and feel, free to live their lives without harassment and discrimination, and can take part in community life
- People benefit from public services in a fairer way and are able to have their say about them
- Staff feel there is an organisational culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect

Why work towards a Fairer Highland?

Sometimes different groups of people feel they do not get treated equally, and that:

- They do not get the same chances as everyone else.
- It can be hard to be a part of things that happen in their communities.
- It can be difficult to get work or don't get enough help to do their jobs

- They do not have the same access to information or services as other people.

Equality law (The Equality Act 2010) protects people from unfair treatment because of nine ‘protected characteristics’ and requires public bodies, such as Highland Council, to show how they make a positive difference to different groups of people.

This document sets out the revised equality outcomes for the period 2021 – 2025 for the three bodies listed above. These are based on national and local evidence including concerns that local equality groups have told us are important. They describe how we are working towards a Fairer Highland together with our employees, our partner agencies, and our local communities.

Background: The law and our duties

The Equality Act 2010 brings together more than forty years of equality legislation and aims to make Britain a more equal society. It protects all of us from unlawful discrimination. The protected characteristics include:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We often call people covered by the protected characteristics “equality groups”.

The Equality Act 2010 requires that all public bodies take account of the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality
- Foster good relations between different groups

Making a difference: Equality Outcomes

Public bodies in Scotland must publish a set of equality outcomes every four years. Equality outcomes are simply things that make a positive difference for equality groups. The difference could be a change in attitudes or how people behave, or it could be improvements to knowledge or skills that result from certain activities. Equality outcomes should be determined according to local need and context. They should lead to improvements in the lives of those who experience prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage in the delivery of services and employment.

Equality outcomes are defined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission as:

- results that you aim to achieve in order to further the ‘needs’ of the general equality duty
- changes in the lives of people affected by what you do as a consequence of the actions you have taken

The Commission also stresses what equality outcomes are not; they are not:

- Outputs
- Performing the other specific duties
- Making your services accessible
- About your services or functions

Reasonable steps should be taken to involve people from equality groups in preparing outcomes, and consideration given to relevant evidence...

Highland Council, Education Authority and Licensing Board Equality Outcomes 2021 - 2025

The Highland Council published its first set of equality outcomes in 2013. These are reviewed every four years and a revised set of equality outcomes has been agreed for the period 2021-2025 which covers work across Council Services, the Education Authority and the Highland Licensing Board.

A summary of the revised outcomes is attached in Appendix 1 and these build on previous equality work. Over time, the outcomes aim to contribute to a fairer, more inclusive Highland.

This review has been carried out while the Covid-19 pandemic still affects us. The full effects of Covid-19 and the associated measures to reduce its spread are not yet known. Consideration of how this has impacted our population, and specifically how it has affected certain equality groups more than other people, will be the focus of work in the immediate future. Our priorities and associated actions may need to change to reflect the needs of our communities.

The review of our outcomes has taken account of a range of local and national data along with feedback from local equality groups.

No single organisation can affect the life chances of all those affected by prejudice or discrimination. The Council work closely with local partners on equality work, including NHS Highland and Police Scotland on shared equality outcomes and joint activity.

Reporting progress and review of outcomes

Each proposed outcome will be accompanied by a detailed description of evidence and data gathered; possible measures and associated actions. Regular reports will be made on progress towards meeting the outcomes. Under the equality duties a progress report must be published every two years and the outcomes should be reviewed every 4 years.

For further information or to request this document in an alternative format e.g. large print, Braille, audio or suitable language, please contact contact:

Equal Opportunities

Tel 01463 702094

Email equal.opportunities@highland.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Highland Council, Highland Education Authority and Highland Licensing Board: Summary of equality outcomes 2021 – 2025

Highland Council Equality Outcomes 2021 – 2025		Lead Service
1	<p>A more diverse workforce that reflects our community</p> <p><i>Priority Activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Workforce • Employability • Improving employment prospects of Resettled Syrian Families 	Corporate Resources - HR
2	<p>Identified groups have improved experiences of access to services and greater involvement in service planning, design and decision making.</p> <p><i>Priority Activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved engagement and Involvement for people with protected characteristics • Improved experiences for disabled people to access services: • Improving the lives of Highland’s Gypsy / Travellers 	Communities and Place
3	<p>In Highland, people from identified groups feel respected and equally safe from harm.</p> <p><i>Priority Activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence Against Women and Girls • Hate Crime and incidents • Reduce prejudice-based bullying in schools 	Health and Social Care
4	<p>With Partners in Highland, work to reduce socio-economic disadvantage for people from identified groups in the light of Covid-19 in line with the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan</p> <p><i>Priority Activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Maximisation • Food Insecurity • Child Poverty 	Communities and Place (for coordination and pending review)
5	<p>In Highland, people from identified groups, including young people, will have improved access to the resources needed to support their mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p><i>Priority Activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership activities • Mental Health and Wellbeing action plan (staff) • Integrated Children’s Services Plan - mental health and wellbeing 	Health and Social Care and Education Workforce Lead: Corporate Resources
6	<p>Staff and pupils have a greater awareness of how they can support equality through delivery of curriculum for excellence and wider school approaches following the principles of the Highland Practice Model and SHANNARI.</p> <p><i>Priority activity:</i></p>	Education and Learning

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and pupils have a greater awareness of how they can support equality and children’s rights 	
7	<p>Increase the number of young people with protected characteristics leaving school moving into positive and sustained destinations.</p> <p><i>Priority activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing gender segregation and stereotyping within the curriculum 	Education and Learning
8	<p>Reduce attainment and achievement gaps between pupils with protected characteristics and also those living in poverty.</p> <p><i>Priority activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce attainment and achievement gaps 	Education and Learning
9	<p>We will meet the needs of children and families who have experienced interrupted learning – reduce exclusions, improve the attainment of pupils looked after by the local authority, support for children from armed forces families.</p> <p><i>Priority activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of work for interrupted learners 	Education and Learning