

Gender Equality Scheme

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 as amended by the Equality Act 2006 makes sex discrimination unlawful in employment, vocational training, education, the provision and sale of goods, facilities, services and premises. In employment and vocational training, it is also unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds that a person is married or a civil partner, or on the grounds of gender reassignment.

The Equal Pay Act 1970 makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate between men and women where they are doing the same or similar work; work rated as equivalent; or work which is of equal value though different in nature. It covers both pay and other terms and conditions such as piecework, output and bonus payments, holidays and sick leave

The Gender Equality Duty does not change the law on single sex services and does not mean that the same services must be provided for men and women where their needs are different.

Women are more likely than men to experience domestic abuse and sexual violence.¹

General Duty

- To promote equality of opportunity between women and men.
- To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender.

Specific Duties

- Produce a Gender Equality Scheme identifying gender equality goals and actions to meet them.
- Consult employees and stakeholders in the development of the scheme.
- Consider including objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.
- Gather and use information on how the authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workplace and in the delivery of services.
- Conduct and publish gender impact assessments of all major policy developments and publish the criteria for conducting assessments.
- Monitor the scheme, publish an annual progress report and review it every three years.

¹ Violence against women includes rape, sexual assault, domestic abuse, sexual harassment, stalking, trafficking, sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and crimes in the name of honour.

- Implement actions set out in the scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so.

What the Council currently does

- Maintains equal pay between men and women.
- Implements a robust system for monitoring requirement, training and promotional opportunities.
- Has a flexible working environment.
- Two weeks paternity leave is provided
- Employees Maternity Rights are outlined in the Councils Maternity Leave and Pay Policy
- Raises awareness of gender equality issues within the authority via training for staff, members and key stakeholders.
- Has a robust consultation process which focuses on gender equality.
- Raises awareness of what constitutes sexual harassment and the support networks in place to support staff.
- Acts promptly and appropriately if we receive any complaints about the way we provide services by ensuring that complaints are dealt with sensitively and fairly.
- The Hate Incident reporting process is accessible by all members of the community to report incidents of Hate Incidents and harassment.
- We offer a sanctuary scheme that provides security upgrades at the homes of people experiencing domestic abuse delivering physical and psychological protection.
- Front line staff in key services such as Housing Options, the Homelessness Prevention Team and the Contact Centre are trained in referral pathways for people experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- Redditch Borough Council rent premises to Stonham for the provision of a women's refuge.
- Redditch Borough Council is an active participant in the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences that deal with high risk domestic abuse cases.
- The Council has developed a specific Gender Reassignment Service Policy and a Gender Reassignment Employment Policy (attached at Appendix 6 to this Scheme).
- Redditch Borough Council recognises the cost of sexual violence and is committed to working to prevent sexual violence, to protect victims from further victimisation and ensure that there is adequate service provision to provide effective support for victims.
- In order to take action on violence against women, and to fulfil our statutory obligations under the Gender Equality Duty, Redditch Borough

Council has secured funding to research and collect data to establish the impact of sexual violence against women locally.

The Council aims to:

- Actively promote agencies which can support domestic violence cases
- Deliver training which focuses on gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation and domestic violence between April 2010 and March 2011. The training will be repeated on a three yearly basis, primarily targeting front line staff.
- Through Sure Start Childrens' Centres, extend our services to meet the more associated members of the community and also encourage men to access the service on offer at the Centres.
- Offer Opportunities for Women and Girls to engage in Sport and Physical Activity in the following way:
 - To set up Cheerleading sessions for girls aged 2-13 years of age.
 - Raise awareness of opportunities in sport for Women by offering taster sessions.
 - To provide support for young mums with children to access physical activity sessions by providing a crèche.
 - To reduce the levels of Coronary Heart Disease, obesity etc through a weekly programme of classes aimed at women.
 - To provide info on health and well being through the Action Sport instructors.
 - Monitor and evaluate sessions through recognised formal procedures to ensure customers' needs are being met.

