

GENDER ACTION PLAN

CARRICKFERGUS BOROUGH COUNCIL

Gender Action Plan

Introduction

Carrickfergus Borough Council is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity for elected members and all its employees.

In line with this commitment and in support of the 'Women in Local Councils' initiative, Carrickfergus Borough Council has developed a Gender Action Plan (GAP). The Plan provides a framework to consider the key issues in respect of sex equality and complements the Council's Equality Scheme as with other equality issues under Section 75, NI Act 1998.

The Council is keen to encourage more integration of men and women into non-traditional roles and to ensure equality of opportunity in terms of access to all relevant levels of employment/leadership, training and in relation to career development opportunities.

The Plan is designed to be flexible. It will be reviewed on an annual basis, with the support of the Local Government Staff Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. Initially it is anticipated that the Plan will cover a 3 year period from 1 April 2007, after which it will be reviewed to determine its effectiveness in meeting the stated objectives.

Carrickfergus Borough Council will provide appropriate resources to ensure the effective implementation of the plan. Targets resulting from the Plan will be incorporated into our business and will include reporting mechanisms to ensure that progress is reviewed by the Senior Management of the organisation and the Council, on a regular basis.

The aims of the action plans are:

1. To ensure that the Council's policies and practices meet legal requirements.
2. To promote best practice in relation to sex equality.
3. To address gender under-representation and job segregation by;
 - Promoting sex equality

- Developing and implementing strategies to identify and remove barriers to proper levels of representation

The following action plan summarises the key actions adopted by the Council in pursuit of this strategy for both elected representatives and employees of the Council.

Carrickfergus Borough Council's Gender Action Plan

Prior to creating a Gender Action Plan, Carrickfergus Borough Council identified what action it had taken to date with regard to Gender issues. These are as follows:

- Established core policies and procedures i.e. Corporate Plan, Equality Scheme, Equal Opportunities Policy, Work-Life Balance initiatives, ie. Flexible working arrangements, (flexi-time), part-time working, job share, term-time working, career breaks, carers leave, child care vouchers.
- Developed flexible working arrangements in line with legislative requirements and best practice including implementing a systematic and objective procedure for considering requests.
- Adoption of Declaration of Principles (Women in Local Councils Initiative)

- Established Gender Equality Group (including Male/Female, Employees, Elected Members, Trade Union Representation)
- Established a Women’s Champion (review “Champion” on a 2 yearly basis)

Taking into account what the Council has achieved to date, the following Gender Action Plan has been developed:

Carrickfergus Borough Council’s Gender Action Plan	
Action	Target Date – (will need updated) - Action by: to be identified
1. Identify barriers preventing participation by women in Carrickfergus Borough Council	April 2008
2. Carry out Gender Action Plan Officer Review .(i.e those Officers in group)	April 2008
3. Review training and development from a gender specific perspective for employees.	
4. Publicise Declaration of Principles throughout Council.	October 2007
5. Evaluate take-up and satisfaction rates of Work-Life Balance policies which will be a part of a full section 75 Review.	December 2007

6. Take action to address gender under-representation in non-traditional roles	January 2010
7. To communicate progress and success of the Gender Action Plan Steering Group activities through the corporate Strategy Sub Committee.	Ongoing (already being carried out in respect of article 75 NI Act 1988))
8. To review any gender issues as they arise.	As they arise