

ACC EQUALITY OUTCOMES ACTION PLAN (DRAFT FOR COMMENT)

Equality Outcome 1

All people with protected characteristics will access information, goods and services knowing that social and physical barriers are identified and removed (with a focus on Age, Gender reassignment and Disability).

Background

Community consultation highlighted concerns around accessibility. For example:

- Those with disabilities (physical or mental health conditions) being digitally excluded.
- Difficulty accessing the ACC website, especially for those who use British Sign Language.
- The need to engage more fully on physical access to council buildings and services.
- A lack of inclusive cultural activities for LGBT+ and ethnic minority communities.
- Inequalities and discrimination experienced by Gypsy/Traveller communities.

Evidence shows that ethnic minority communities, disabled people and women are among the hardest-hit groups by the Covid-19 pandemic. Communities also fed back that they had very little awareness of the work the Council were doing to address inequality, for example, via the Equality Outcomes.

To improve these issues and achieve this equality outcome, ACC commit to the following objectives and actions:

EO1, Objective 1: Improved Communication

Improve digital inclusion; improve website accessibility; ensure a consistent approach to communication support across council services.

Action 1: Raise awareness with target communities of the organisations and programmes that are providing digital hardware and the classes and other support available to support digital access.

How would we know that we achieved this action? We will measure and compare uptake by more diverse groups, where data is available.

Action 2: Support the Gypsy/Traveller community to access digital skills information and training.

How would we know that we achieved this action? We will assess provision of information and sessions aimed to engage and support Gypsy Travellers with digital learning.

Action 3: Continue to support the provision of digital support either through the Digital Champion model, support for 3rd sector funding applications or direct ACC provision- Explore options to increase accessibility where funding is available.

How would we know that we achieved this action? We will measure how many residents are supported; % of people who feel their access has improved, (feedback/survey)

Action 4: Connect Customer Experience ACC officers with affected community groups to identify and address gaps related to web accessibility.

How would we know that we achieved this action? Gaps identified and addressed. Examples of instances raised by customers and addressed

Action 5: Translate critical information on the ACC website into British Sign Language (BSL) and highlight available resources.

How would we know that we achieved this action? Range of information translated; number of translated pieces, compared year-on-year; qualitative feedback from representative Focus Groups.

Action 6: Raise awareness and train Council officers on accessible communication support in different languages and the role of interpreters.

How would we know that we achieved this action? We will keep record of the number of Council Officers who undergo training. We will also distribute resources to officers via internal channels.

Action 7: Raise awareness with communities about availability of interpreters and communication support on Aberdeen City Council website and through any other possible mean.

How would we know that we achieved this action? Full information about communication support and how to contact ACC services will be available on our website and through Newsbites.

EO2, Objective 2: Improved Physical Access
Ensure all proposals are measured against a recognised accessibility toolkit;
fully consider accessibility issues.

Action 8: Work with disability groups and the wider public including young families and carers to improve participation and identify physical access issues in new and existing Council spaces, buildings and developments.

How would we know that we achieved this action? We will regularly report on: number and examples of proposed physical changes that are brought to DEP; other physical changes identified by other groups or through other channels.

Action 9: Include consultation with relevant disability groups and organisations in any impact assessment involving physical access issues.

How would we know that we achieved this action? Assess number of these interactions resulting in changes/mitigation, by using information from Integrated Impact Assessments.

EO3, Objective 3: Services and Events are Promoted, Inclusive and Welcoming.

Action 10: Develop a checklist for inclusive events in consultation with community groups and council services.

How would we know that we achieved this action? Resource developed and disseminated to event organisers.

Action 11: Consider funding (through Fairer Aberdeen fund) for more practical, inclusive community projects that bring people together in a safe, family-friendly space and build relationships.

How would we know that we achieved this action? Increased satisfaction within target communities relating to community safety and opportunities to socialise.

Action 12: Consider flexible permits to enable appropriate disposal of household waste in Gypsy/Traveller campsites.

How would we know that we achieved this action? Number of permits issued; explore other options to enable appropriate disposal of household waste in Gypsy/Traveller campsites.

Action 13: Review whether dietary requirements (particularly of people with protected characteristics) are being met across council services (e.g. schools).

How would we know that we achieved this action? Review completed. Present recommendations taken forward.

Action 14: Promote free ABZ Works training via community groups to individuals affected by the pandemic, building capacity and confidence after Covid-19 and for re-entry to work.

How would we know that we achieved this action? Uptake from community groups/individuals.

Other Committed actions: Launch and promote EO Plan through both internal and external channels; EO integrated into existing Service Level Agreements to support delivery; monitor feedback on implementation of appropriate actions with affected community groups; high profile launch with visible ACC support; evidence in Service Level Agreements and monitoring reports; community groups to feedback via annual survey devised by Equalities Team.

Equality Outcome 2

Diverse communities in Aberdeen will have an increased sense of safety and belonging within their neighbourhood and City (with a focus on Race (including Gypsy/Travellers), Religion and Sexual Orientation).

Background

Whilst the majority (69%) of those surveyed in the community consultation said they felt comfortable walking alone at night in their neighbourhood, much still needs to be done to increase safety and a sense of belonging within our city. Police Scotland data shows a growth in hate crime in Aberdeen over the previous 3 years – whilst race related crime relates to 50% of the crimes reported, there was a 63% increase in hate crime related to sexual orientation. It is widely recognised that Hate Crime is significantly under-reported.

Feedback from people of diverse faith groups and communities suggested that safety and a sense of belonging could be improved by the Council proactively marking a wider range of religious festivities and having more events to celebrate diversity in the city.

To improve these issues and achieve this equality outcome, ACC commit to the following objectives and actions:

EO2, Objective 1: Robust and strategic approach to hate crime.

Action 1: Contribute to the community planning project on hate crime.

How would we know that we achieved this action? A robust and measurable action plan is developed and implemented.

Action 2: Training for officers and elected members to raise awareness of hate crime and how it impacts on those with protected characteristics.

How would we know that we achieved this action? Number of elected members and officers trained.

EO2, Objective 2: Diversity is celebrated in Aberdeen; community events are supported; the Council's role is recognised.

Action 3: ACC to promote events celebrating diversity.

How would we know that we achieved this action? Number of key events promoted by ACC, e.g. through in-kind support from officers and/or elected members.

Action 4: Consider the Council's support for appropriate equality-related community events to ensure all protected characteristic groups are provided with the opportunity to receive council in-kind support as required.

How would we know that we achieved this action? Number of community events supported by the council (in-kind support)

Action 5: Explore opportunities to support some form of international market (local businesses) or similar, to highlight the benefits of cultural diversity and bringing diverse communities together.

How would we know that we achieved this action? To be developed (as City Centre Masterplan develops).

Equality outcome 3

Civic participation of people with protected characteristics will be improved by ensuring our leaders, staff and organisation champion the equality agenda in the city (with a focus on Disability, Race and Sex).

Community consultation identified the relationship between the City Council and communities as an area for improvement, with more frequent and meaningful opportunities to engage required, increased accountability and improved communication in relation to equalities work.

Evidence shows that women, people from ethnic minority groups and disabled people continue to be under-represented in all areas of democratic and public life, with 19% of participants in our community survey saying they felt excluded from civic activities because of their protected characteristic. Related to employment, data from the 2011 census shows higher unemployment for African communities, while more recent data also shows higher levels of unemployment for the Bangladeshi community.

To understand, identify and address barriers to participation and representation ACC commit to the following actions:

Action 1: Improve data gathering on representation and civic participation, e.g. ethnicity, gender and disability of:

- Councillors
- Community Council members
- 2022 Council election candidates
- Council funded / supported organisations (e.g. through procurement)

How would we know that we achieved this action? We will produce quantitative and qualitative data.

Action 2: Engage with community groups to better understand systemic barriers to participation in civic activities and consider ways and support interventions to address them (e.g. promote voter registration and turnout for 2022 local elections and equality-related hustings events). Civic activities include:

- Voting / registering to vote;

- Involvement with Community Councils / other civic groups;
- Involvement with trade unions, political parties, etc;
- Standing for political office;
- Volunteering.

How would we know that we achieved this action? Issues are identified in partnership with communities and interventions delivered to address them.

Action 3: Information about external funding opportunities for civic participation and representation are promoted to target different communities.

How would we know that we achieved this action? List of promoted opportunities.

Action 4: Explore potential for participatory budgeting, funding, and commissioning to be linked with addressing inequalities, under-representation, and other related issues.

How would we know that we achieved this action? Number and types of projects funded to help address under-representation.

Action 5: Equality workshops for community councils, including raising awareness of lived experience of minority/marginalised communities in those localities.

How would we know that we achieved this action? Number of community councils and councillors trained; feedback from participants.