**EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

## Introduction

The purpose of this section is to ensure Community Councils are aware of the general responsibilities relating to Equality and Diversity and how they can play an important role in promoting and supporting equality in the community.

**Public Sector Equality Duty**

Community Councils are subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under Section 149 (2) of the Equality Act 2010 which states *“A person who is not a public authority but who exercises public functions must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (1)”* which states:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

* Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
* Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
* Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 is available here: [Equality Act 2010 (legislation.gov.uk)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149)

The PSED replaces the race, disability and gender equality duties. The PSED applies to the ‘relevant protected characteristics’ – age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation and, to a more limited extent, to the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) are the enforcement body and it is their responsibility to provide guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and the PSED.

A link to their technical guidance on the PSED in Scotland is available here: [Technical guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty: Scotland | Equality and Human Rights Commission (equalityhumanrights.com)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/technical-guidance-public-sector-equality-duty-scotland)

## How can Community Councils help promote equalities in their areas?

* + find out about the makeup of the area – how many people of different races, with disabilities or of different genders live in the area.
  + make sure that any advertising is accessible to all, and that meetings take place in accessible buildings at times that suit everyone.
  + try to engage ‘hard-to reach’ groups – help to do this is available from your Community Council liaison officer or your local council for voluntary service.
  + run local events in partnership with local equality groups, e.g. ethnic groups, disability and other community groups.
  + always consult about how any plans would affect all members of the community,
  + act in an inclusive manner when inviting speakers from ethnic, disability and community groups to discuss difficulties they are experiencing in the community with the Community Council.
  + make it clear that the Community Council will not support any discrimination, harassment or victimisation.