



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Control Box

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Introduction

Equality of employment opportunity is crucial to the advancement of a diverse and tolerant culture at Whanganui District Council (Council). For this reason, it is important that Council is at the forefront of policies and practices that remove discrimination, provide equal opportunity and value diversity among its employees.

This policy applies to all employee positions, whether these are management or general roles, and includes employees in all employment categories.

Council's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy, its goals, and the content of programmes or other policies relating to EEO, have the full support of the Chief Executive and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

Objective

Council will provide employees with equality of opportunity in the workplace (e.g. in access to, consideration for, and encouragement in recruitment, selection, promotion, conditions of employment, training and career development) regardless of individual differences (for instance: race; colour; ethnic or national origin; sexual orientation; marital status; disability; ethical belief; age; family status; political opinion or religion; employee association involvement; or identity of partner or relative), and will aim to at all times to treat diversity as an asset to the organisation.

Principles

Council is committed to:

- a) Identifying and eliminating all aspects of our policies, procedures and other institutional barriers that cause or perpetuate, or tend to cause or perpetuate, inequality in respect of the employment of any person or group of persons
- b) Ensuring that all its policies and practices uphold the principle of equal employment opportunity
- c) Ensuring that all staff appointments are made solely on the basis of merit, and that all promotions, advancements, salary reviews and professional/career development opportunities are based solely on merit
- d) Improving employment and development opportunities for groups who are traditionally under-represented in either occupational groups or levels of seniority, in particular women and Māori and Pacific people.

Policy statements

1. All staff contribute to achievement of this policy

1.1 ELT, along with Managers and Team Leaders are both responsible and accountable for the operational implementation of this policy with the assistance and advice of Human Resources (HR).

1.2 The HR team is responsible for assessing staffing policies and processes and making improvements to reduce bias, along with monitoring and reporting on this policy.

1.3 All Council staff are expected to be aware of what discrimination is¹, how it occurs and demonstrate commitment to its elimination, as well as to the encouragement of equity and diversity in employment.

2. Discrimination issues will be addressed

2.1 In general, Council employees should use their normal management reporting lines to report any issues around inequality. In most instances an employee will be able to achieve a satisfactory outcome by reporting the issues to their own Manager, the General/Group Manager of their area, or some other senior staff member.

2.2 However, escalation may be required in the following circumstances, when an employee either:

- Reports an inequality issue through their normal management reporting lines and they believe on reasonable grounds that the outcome leaves the inequality issue uncorrected or creates a further inequality issue; or
- Believes on reasonable grounds that if they report an inequality issue through their normal management reporting lines there may be retaliatory action against them; or
- Believes on reasonable grounds that their Manager is involved in an inequality issue or is closely associated with people involved in an inequality issue.

3. Escalation is provided for

3.1 Where an employee believes on reasonable grounds either that their Manager or General/Group Manager is, or may be, involved in an inequality issue, or is closely associated with the people involved an inequality issue,

¹ Information on how staff will be supported to understand and respond to instances of discrimination can be found in section 5

the employee should discuss the matter with the General Manager People & Performance.

4. Complaints will be actioned

4.1 Where a complaint is made to the Chief Executive or the Chief Operating Officer or General Manager People & Performance or ELT they will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint;
- Arrange an interview with the complainant;
- Arrange an investigation of the allegation;
- Arrange the keeping of detailed file notes recording the interview, the investigation and the explanation given to the complainant about procedures that will be followed; and
- Report back to the complainant on how the matter has been dealt with, within 20 working days.

4.2 In some circumstances, where a potential or perceived conflict of interest may occur, the Chief Executive or the Chief Operating Officer or the General Manager People & Performance or ELT may appoint an independent person to undertake and deliver Council's response.

5. Council will comply with all EEO legislation

5.1 To achieve our policy principles, Council will ensure it complies with all EEO legislation as well as taking the following additional actions to promote fairness and diversity through:

- Using inclusive language;
- Continued participation in events such as Pink Shirt Day, White Ribbon March or support for LGBTQIA+ initiatives such as Pride Week;
- Providing flexible work arrangements as per our Flexible Working Policy;
- Providing training to staff about discrimination awareness and elimination;
- Introducing a collaborative culture programme; and
- Introducing a diversity and inclusion programme.

5.2 Council remains committed to creating an inclusive culture and to being respectful and responsive to the changing needs of its staff. This includes, but is not limited to, providing assistance should staff decide to change their pronouns, assisting where a member of staff may be unable to do something due to religious beliefs or in any other areas as required.

5.3 If you are concerned our EEO policy is not being appropriately supported, please discuss your concerns with your direct manager in the first instance, or with HR.

Legislation and Related Documents

[Human Rights Act 1993](#)

[Employment Relations Act 2000](#)

[Te Tiriti o Waitangi](#)

[Pay and employment equity](#)

[Whanganui District Council's Code of Conduct](#)

[Whanganui District Council's Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policy](#)

[Whanganui District Council's Bullying & Harassment Policy](#)

Wellbeing (75%), Gender (56%) and Bias (55%) were the three most significant diversity issues for Kiwi workplaces according to the 2020 NZ Workplace Diversity Survey (Diversity Works NZ).