

Shetland Islands Council's Equal Pay Statement 2025-2029

Shetland Islands Council is committed to the principle of equal pay for all our employees and to reducing occupational segregation. This Equal Pay Statement, and the attached data on Occupational Segregation (at 2023), should be read in conjunction with our Equality and Diversity Policy which is available at <https://www.shetland.gov.uk/strategy-performance/equality-diversity> where we also publish our regular Employment Equalities Monitoring Report and Equal Pay Gap Information.

We are committed to eliminate discrimination and encourage a culture that values and promotes equality and diversity across the organisation. To achieve this, we aim to ensure a fair, open and transparent approach to the determination of pay and conditions of employment, which does not discriminate unlawfully and is free from bias across all of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We acknowledge that people have more than one protected characteristic that defines their identity and take an intersectional approach to addressing experiences of discrimination.

We believe that all employees should receive equal pay for the same or broadly similar work, for work rated as equivalent, or for work of equal value. We recognise that avoiding unfair discrimination and rewarding fairly the skills, experience and potential of all employees will improve motivation and loyalty, enhance efficiency and demonstrate that Shetland Islands Council is a good employer.

In our Corporate Plan, Our Ambition 2021-2026

<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/ourambition> we assert “our ambition is for the council **to be a fabulous place to work**, through exceptional employee experience, talented managers and leaders, and a culture underpinned by our values, kindness, fairness and equality”.

We recognise that violence against women is a cause and consequence of wider gender inequality. Women's labour market inequality also sustains, and is a result of, wider gender inequality in society. We believe that addressing women's labour market inequality is therefore a necessary step in preventing violence against women, both within and out with the workplace. We are also committed to creating and maintaining a culture free from sexism, sexual harassment, misogyny and other forms of violence against women.

Reducing occupational segregation (where an occupation is dominated by a group that shares a protected characteristic, usually sex) is a key priority and we aim to ensure that all protected characteristics are represented at all levels of the workforce and in all areas of work. We also aim to have a workforce that is representative of the Shetland community.

The Council's responsible officer for equality in employment is the Executive Manager – Human Resources.

We will ensure that adequate resources are in place to meet our equal pay commitments. We will work in partnership with our recognised trades unions to eliminate unfair or unlawful practices that impact on pay and take appropriate remedial actions.

We will:

- Use a robust framework of job evaluation which allows an objective and reliable measure of the size and relative worth of each job. The framework is underpinned by equal opportunities practice ensuring that there is no bias related to any of the protected characteristics;
- Ensure that all those involved in carrying out job evaluation or job sizing are appropriately trained;
- Inform employees of how pay practices work and how their own pay is determined;
- Allow employees to appeal against job evaluation outcomes;
- Carry out regular Equal Pay audits in line with Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) guidance to identify any pay gaps and their causes;
- Continue to monitor and act where necessary, regarding:
 - Pay gaps for sex, ethnicity and disability
 - Occupational Segregation;
- Develop initiatives and work in partnership with schools, colleges and other partners involved in training, skills development and employability to reduce occupational segregation on the basis of sex, disability and ethnicity;
- Make opportunities for training, development and career progression available to all employees, encouraging those who are interested to develop to their full potential, so their talents can be realised to maximise the efficiency of the Council;
- Monitor and respond to complaints and grievances on equal pay timeously and in accordance with agreed procedures;
- Carry out Equality Impact Assessments on all employment policies;
- Improve data collection of employees and applicants in regard to protected characteristics to help us identify equality issues and where remedial action is required;
- Provide training and guidance on reasonable adjustments, and monitor effectiveness in recruiting disabled applicants and maintaining employment for employees who become disabled;
- Maintain and promote our “Happy to talk Flexible” strapline in our adverts and deliver a framework of terms and conditions which are family friendly and flexible;

- Recognise that many aspects of life can impact on an employee's capacity to engage fully with work, and develop supportive workplace practices, guides and procedures;
- Develop an HR framework that supports flexible and agile ways of working including the design of jobs and work;
- Continue to work in partnership with the recognised Trades Unions on equal pay and equalities in employment;
- Demonstrate that we continue to meet the standards set by Close the Gap so we maintain our accreditation as an Equally Safe at Work employer at Bronze level, or above;
- Publish data on pay gaps, occupational segregation, pay quartiles, employee information (including on recruitment, development and retention) as part of the Council's Equality Outcomes Mainstreaming Report;
- Take regard of relevant guidance on reporting parameters when we publish equalities data, ensuring statistical robustness and to avoid the possible identification of individual employees;
- Develop and support staff forums for employees with a protected characteristic, where there is employee interest, prioritising sex, disability and ethnicity initially given the reporting requirements.