

**Inverness Badenoch & Strathspey
Citizens Advice Bureau
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT**



Commitment and Scope of Policy

The CAB service comprises all Citizens Advice Bureaux within Scotland and the Association – Citizens Advice Scotland.

We in the Scottish CAB Service are committed to the principle of equality of opportunity for all in employment, volunteering, access to advice, service provision and within decision-making structures. This commitment involves bringing equality of opportunity into the mainstream of the CAB service by integrating equal opportunities into all of its operations to take account of and reflect the diverse needs of the Scottish population.

Discrimination

We recognise that issues relating to age, disability, pregnancy/maternity, gender reassignment, sex, race, religion and belief, and sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership raise questions of discrimination in society.

We acknowledge that to achieve the effective implementation of this policy would require taking positive action to overcome barriers to services, employment and volunteering opportunities for groups who suffer discrimination.

We also recognise that advice and support services need to be delivered by a workforce that reflects the diversity of our communities and that it is necessary therefore for this diversity to be appropriately represented throughout CAS and bureaux. To this end we will seek accurate information about existing and potential clients, workers, and volunteers leading to appropriate marketing and provision of services and job opportunities.

We will work to ensure that that the CAB Service actively acts equitably and justly; that those with a protected characteristic feel welcome within the CAB Service and feel able to use and contribute to the organisation. To facilitate this, we will provide training and develop procedures and guidelines to ensure that all those involved in the management of the CAB Service:

- Know about the inequalities and difficulties faced by different sections of the community within which the bureau operates
- Have an understanding of the needs of these diverse communities

- Routinely assess the impact of its policies and practices on particular groups of people and particularly those with a protected characteristic
- Provide an appropriate and equal service to all within its area of benefit.

Obligations

The CAB Service believes that no job applicant, worker, volunteer, or client should receive less favourable treatment than another on grounds of age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity or gender reassignment. There is no situation in which the CAB Service will discriminate unfairly or unlawfully. In addition to our moral and legal responsibility we recognise our obligation under the Equality Act (2010) and will also work to comply with the guidance on best practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Implementation

We accept that the implementation of the equal opportunity policy is the responsibility of all those within the CAB Service, including the managers and committees that comprise Citizens Advice Scotland, as well as volunteer and paid bureau staff and management committees of bureaux. It is recognised, however, that those working at management level have a specific duty to set the required standards and ensure those standards are met.

The service recognises that to turn policy into practice equality standards have to be subsumed within the membership scheme standards documents that set out the requirements that all Bureaux have to meet. Compliance with these standards will then be audited through the CAS audit process.