

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 9 January 2024

Venue and Event Booking Policy

Executive/routine
Wards

Routine
All

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Policy and Sustainability Committee are asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note the core principle of the Venue and Event Booking Policy that the Council will comply with relevant legislation relating to discrimination when dealing with anyone seeking to hire Council premises for any event. The Council may refuse or cancel a booking where it can show that its action has a proper basis in law and is necessary and proportionate in order to protect public safety, public order, health or morals, the rights and freedoms of other people;
 - 1.1.2 Approve the Venue and Event Booking Policy (attached in Appendix 1);
 - 1.1.3 Note the intention to use existing booking systems to manage the booking of venues by September 2024 to ensure that all hirers sign and agree to the Council's Terms and Conditions of Let; and
 - 1.1.4 Note that the Council's Legal Services team will produce revised Terms and Conditions of Let by April 2024 that are appropriate for each venue, and which clarify the obligations of each party regarding additional costs, and the parameters for denying or cancelling events under the terms of the policy.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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Venue and Event Booking Policy

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report seeks approval to introduce a Venue and Events Booking Policy that will apply to all Council owned and operated venues and event spaces, defined as those spaces which are let to external organisations. The policy will be shared with third party organisations that manage venues on behalf of the Council, such as Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs) and Community Centres, with a request that they either adopt it or review their own policies to ensure compliance.
- 2.2 The proposed policy is guided by existing legislation and defines the Council's obligations under such legislation. The policy will be delivered through venues adhering to use of the Council's approved software for booking venues, and by third party organisations either adopting, or updating, their respective policies.
- 2.3 The type of people and organisations that rent or use Council venues is diverse and for the purpose of this report they will be referred to as the hirer/s.

3. Background

- 3.1 A range of Council services let venues and spaces out including: music in the Usher Hall; festivals and corporate events in the Assembly Rooms; literary and community gatherings in libraries; community centres, City Chambers events, including weddings, graduation ceremonies, meetings, conferences and gatherings.
- 3.2 Income from venue lettings form an integral part of service budgets and will often be used to develop additional income streams from commercial and non-commercial sources.
- 3.3 The Council also has contracts in place with third party organisations such as Community Centre Management Committees and ALEOs (Edinburgh Leisure, Capital Theatres and EICC), who are responsible for their own booking systems and procedures.
- 3.4 The Council has experienced a small number of recent cases relating to the use of Council venues which raised various issues, including: questioning the scope that the Council has to cancel or deny hirers use of Council venues, how to manage

events which grow in scale and complexity, contracting and cancellation clauses, who is responsible for additional costs, and the purpose of events.

- 3.5 In addition to issues raised with the Council, a number of cases challenging organisations on their letting and programme policies have been tested in the courts, as well as in the media.
- 3.6 The approval of a new policy will enable the Council to provide clarity on its legal position with regard to Equalities, Human Rights and Freedom of Speech.
- 3.7 There is a core requirement for the Council to have a Venue and Events Booking Policy for reasons outlined in this report.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The Venue and Events Booking Policy (Appendix 1) has been compiled to ensure that the Council has responsible venue hire procedures in place and to ensure that all officers and Elected Members are aware of the Council's legal obligations for upholding freedom of speech and expression. The policy will be accompanied by guidance for implementation.

Legal Context

- 4.2 The Council has a responsibility to comply with the law, and to ensure that adequate procedures are in place to manage this in relation to use of Council property for such purposes.
- 4.3 The policy therefore clarifies the legal context for venues in respect of booking/rental of spaces, and highlights that the Council must not discriminate against any person or organisation wishing to do so.
- 4.4 The policy outlines the key pieces of legislation that inform the Council's approach. These are the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Equalities Act 2010.
- 4.5 The core statement in the policy reads as follows: 'The Council will comply with relevant legislation relating to discrimination when dealing with anyone seeking to hire Council premises for any event. The Council may refuse or cancel a booking where it can show that its action has a proper basis in law and is necessary and proportionate in order to protect public safety, public order, health or morals, the rights and freedoms of other people.'

Management of Venue Bookings

- 4.6 There are a variety of ways in which venues are booked, contracted and managed. To support the implementation of this new policy, by September 2024, it is intended that all services will manage venue bookings through one of the two approved software packages (currently, Zipporah and Artifax). Use of these systems will enable all bookings to be managed in a consistent and transparent way that enables scheduling, contracts and payments to be administered.

- 4.7 It will also ensure that all hirers using Council owned venues acknowledge that they have read and accepted the Council's Terms and Conditions of Let, which will outline both parties' responsibilities and cost liabilities. Given the diversity of venues, Legal Services will produce revised Terms and Conditions of Let that is appropriate and proportionate the venue.
- 4.8 The Council will reserve the right to conduct risk assessments on any event that requires additional consideration (such as attendance numbers, audience behaviour, production requirements). The Terms and Conditions of Let will clarify that hirers will bear the liability of additional costs for venue bookings and officer time if the risk assessment identifies that they are required.
- 4.9 The Council also reserves the right to not accept, or retrospectively cancel, bookings that have been identified as high risk and present a material risk to the delivery of the core service where this can be justified within the legislation.
- 4.10 In order to justify such a decision, the Council must follow a standard procedure that can be justified as necessary rather than discriminatory. If there are any concerns or queries in relation to an event or venue booking, it is expected that the booking be passed on to the relevant Head of Service for further checks.
- 4.11 It is proposed to use the SARA process (Scan, Analyse, Respond and Assess) to assess events and inform risk assessments. Further details are contained in the policy document and Council officers will be trained to implement this process appropriately.
- 4.12 When a hirer's request is to be denied or revoked, this decision must be made by the relevant Head of Service in consultation with Legal Services and the relevant Executive Director (as outlined in the policy).
- 4.13 In the case of third-party organisations that operate Council venues, such as Community Centre Management Committees and ALEOs (Edinburgh Leisure, Capital Theatres and EICC), they are responsible for their own booking systems, processes and complaints procedures.
- 4.14 The policy will be shared with these organisations with the expectation that they either adopt and adapt it within their own policies, or that they review and update their existing policies to ensure that they are compliant with the legislation.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 If Committee approve the new policy:
- 5.1.1 The Council's Terms and Conditions of Let will be updated by April 2024 and will be attached to all future venue bookings; A revised booking procedure will be implemented by September 2024, using one of the Council's approved software systems, with associated training as appropriate; and
- 5.1.2 An in-house training programme, and an Elected Member briefing, will be developed and communicated to ensure awareness of the new policy.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The introduction of the policy is not expected to incur costs for the Council.
- 6.2 However, it is expected that the cost of software licenses will be met by the services who require access to Zipporah and Artifax and is likely to be covered by the income received from bookings. The total cost to extend or amend functionality is expected to be c. £5,000 (a formal quotation will be requested following Committee).
- 6.3 The use of this software is considered essential to ensure that the Council can carry out appropriate due diligence for all venue bookings, and to minimise any future risk of legal challenge.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 Having an approved Venue Booking Policy will enable to the Council to provide clearer guidance and protocols in relation to the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equalities Act 2010. It will provide officers with the materials needed when reaching and decision on whether to cancel or deny and venue booking as well as the steps taken (or planned) to mitigate any adverse impacts.
- 7.2 The parameters for use of the Council's venues, under Article 10 of the Human Rights Act (The Freedom of Expression), are that people have the right to hold their own opinions and to express themselves freely without government interference. This is likely to result in the hosting of events that some may find offensive yet remain valid bookings which meet the legal parameters described in the policy.
- 7.3 An interim Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been drafted in advance of Committee's consideration of this policy. The IIA will be kept under review as the contract Terms are reviewed and will be monitored once the guidelines are fully operational.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 As a public body, the Council has statutory duties relating to climate emissions and biodiversity. The Council

“must, in exercising its functions, act in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of emissions reduction targets”

(Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019), and

“in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions”

(Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004)

- 8.2 The City of Edinburgh Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to work towards a target of net zero emissions by 2030 for both city and corporate emissions and embedded this as a core priority of the Council Business Plan 2023-27. The Council also declared a Nature Emergency in 2023.

Environmental Impacts

- 8.3 The IIA process did not identify any adverse environmental impacts arising from the introduction of this policy.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 The Council has a responsibility to comply with the law, and to ensure that adequate procedures are in place to manage that in relation to use of Council property for such purposes.
- 9.2 In developing the policy, officers sought external legal advice from Harper Macleod.
- 9.3 The Council's approach to venue and event booking was escalated in the Place directorate risk register. Approval of the policy will mitigate this risk significantly to reduce the level of risk assessed. In accordance with the Council's approach to risk management, its implementation will be monitored on divisional and directorate risk registers, where applicable.
- 9.4 Using approved venue booking software, updating the Council's Terms and Conditions of Let, training, and adopting due diligence in applying the policy will reduce the Council's exposure to legal challenges resulting from refusing or revoking a hirers request.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 None.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 Venue and Event Booking Policy

Venue Hire and Event Booking Policy

Implementation Date: 1 September 2024 [subject to Committee approval]

Control schedule

Version control

Approved by	Policy and Sustainability Committee
Approval date	Submitted for approval – 9 January 2024
Senior Responsible Officer	Karl Chapman, Head of Heritage, Cultural Venues and Museums
Author	Karl Chapman
Scheduled for review	Annual, with a substantive refresh every three years or when there are changes to legislation

Version	Date	Author	Comment
0.1		Karl Chapman	
0.2		Legal Services	

Subsequent committee decisions affecting this policy

Date	Committee	Link to report	Link to minute
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Venue Hire and Event Booking Policy

Policy statement

The Venue Hire and Event Booking Policy has been created to ensure that the Council stays within the law and complies with all relevant legislation when dealing with all venue hire and booking of Council premises for any event.

Scope

The policy will assist in ensuring that:

- The Council complies with the relevant legislation and stays within the law;
- Appropriate and transparent venue hire procedures are in place across the Council; and
- Everyone is clear on the Council's legal obligations to uphold freedom of speech and expression within Council venues.

The Council must comply with relevant legislation relating to discrimination when dealing with anyone seeking to hire Council premises for any event. The Council may refuse or cancel a booking where it can show that its action has a proper basis in law and is necessary and proportionate to protect public safety, public order, health or morals, the rights and freedoms of other people. Guidance on the relevant legislation is provided.

This policy sets out the process for dealing with bookings for Council venues, and supports the decision making process, enabling the risks to be assessed and providing clarity on the next steps where any issues are identified.

It is anticipated that the following users will be expected to refer to this document:

- People responsible for processing venue bookings;
- Service Managers in Cultural Venues, Libraries, Community Centres, Schools and Children's Centres, City Chambers, etc.;
- Line Managers, Heads of Service and Executive Directors; and
- Elected Members.

The types of venues covered by this policy include Council owned and operated:

- Cultural Venues;

- Locality offices and business centres;
- Libraries ;
- Community centres/ community assets;
- Leisure centres;
- Schools and Children’s centres; and
- City Chambers.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and any person concerned with the booking or hiring of Council owned and operated property should consult this guidance.

Definitions

The relevant legislation is attached in Appendix 1.

Policy content

The Venue and Event Booking Policy has been created to ensure that the Council stays within the law and complies with all relevant legislation.

The policy will also assist in promoting responsible venue hire procedures, ensuring that everyone aware of the Council’s legal obligations to uphold freedom of speech and expression within Council venues.

There have been recent test cases for venues cancelling events. In summary, under the Human Rights Act 1988 and Equality Act 2010, a venue which provides a hire or lease agreement cannot refuse or cancel a booking unless it can show that its action has a proper basis in law and is necessary and proportionate to protect public safety, public order, health or morals, the rights and freedoms of other people.

Local authorities have a responsibility to ensure their venue booking arrangements comply with the law, by ensuring that booking systems are in place and appropriate training/information is provided to officers and Elected Members to understand what to do if there are concerns with venue booking requests.

This document provides guidance on the processes involved in ensuring that the Council takes informed decisions are made when hiring out Council venues. Where a booking has been proposed which causes concern, it is expected that the booking details will be passed on to the relevant manager and/or agencies for further checks.

There are several important issues that must be considered when using Council venues, including (for example):

- Regulatory enforcement framework. A range of regulations are relevant to events (e.g., licensing, environmental health, noise pollution) and early discussion should be arranged to look at whether an event conforms to the relevant regulations;
- Illegal activities. It is important that venues pay due regard to preventing illegal activities i.e. fundraising for unlawful purposes, engaging proscribed individuals or organisations, criminal activities or discriminatory actions etc; and
- Risk Assessment. Risk assessing events should form a mandatory part of the Council's booking process to ensure that risks such as crowd control and likelihood of protest are mitigated and costs for identified risks are passed on to the hirer and/or event organiser.

The Council may refuse or cancel a booking where it can show that its action has a proper basis in law and is necessary and proportionate in order to protect public safety, public order, health or morals, the rights and freedoms of other people.

Managing the booking of venues

All venue bookings must be contracted and be proportionate to the nature and scale of the booking. All individuals and organisations must acknowledge, and agree to, the Council's Terms and Conditions of Let. Organisations seeking use of the Council's venues for any event are obligated to provide the following information at the time of booking:

- Details of the hiring party including name of organiser/group, address, company or charity registration.
- Event information e.g. attendance numbers, programme, timings, agenda, format, name of speakers, who will be invited, seating arrangements, etc.
- Copies of event material/promotional literature/social media where available.
- Any information requested by the Council to inform its event risk assessment.

The Council will reserve the right to conduct risk assessments on any event that requires additional consideration with regard to attendance numbers, audience behaviour, production requirements. The Terms and Conditions of Let will clarify that hirers will bear the liability of additional costs relating to the venue booking if the risk assessment identifies that they are required.

The Council also reserves the right to not accept, or retrospectively cancel, bookings that have been identified as high risk and present a material risk to the delivery of the core service where additional measures are deemed insufficient.

Managing Issues - The SARA process

If there are any concerns or queries in relation to an event or venue booking it is expected that the booking be passed on to the relevant line manager and/or agencies for further checks.

It is recommended using the SARA process (Scan, Analyse, Respond and Assess) to assess events and inform risk assessments.

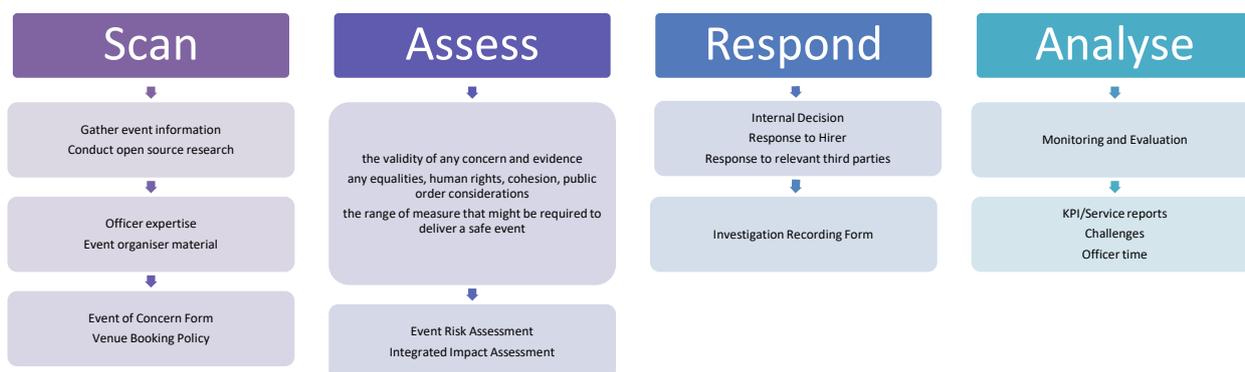
The SARA model employs four stages.

Scanning – the identifying and prioritising of potential problems.

Analysis – the analysis of potential problems, by gathering information to identify underlying causes of the problem.

Response – the development and implementation of tailored activities to address the causes of the problem, as identified in the analysis phase.

Assessment – the measurement of the impact of the response to test if it had the desired effect and to make changes to the response if required.



The Decision-Making Process

A risk assessment report based on the SARA process is considered to be an appropriate framework for the Council to assess events of concern. All decision making relating to events of concern must ensure that information gathered is assessed appropriately and the final decision is justifiable within law.

Due Diligence.

In relation to this policy, the Council may conduct checks on individuals and groups seeking to host an event in Council-owned and operated premises.

Rigorous scrutiny will assist in ensuring compliance with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the public sector equality duty) which includes having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people sharing different “protected characteristics”.

Those responsible for undertaking checks to ensure events are compliant and adhering to Council values are reminded that conducting such checks should be managed sensitively and proportionately, in strict accordance with the legal requirements for information sharing amongst statutory partners and data protection principles.

Complaints

The Council is committed to an open and transparent comments and complaints process and has a Corporate Complaints Policy which can be found here <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/directory/10239/policy-register/category/10486>.

All complaints relating to the booking and use of Council owned premises should follow the Council's complaints process – [Comments and complaints – The City of Edinburgh Council](#). This will enable comments and complaints to be dealt with in the appropriate way and will ensure that data can be collected for future monitoring and evaluation.

A statement will be available for use on social media platforms which will direct people to the relevant web page and form. Dealing with complaints will also form part of the staff training programme.

Implementation

Subject to approval from Committee, Legal Services will update the Council's Terms and Conditions of Let to be attached to all venue bookings by April 2024. Officers will work to implement a revised booking procedure that uses one of the Council's approved software and implement staff training as appropriate by September 2024.

Officers will work with Customer and Digital Services to ensure that all service areas engaged with venue bookings are using one of the Council's approved software systems.

The Venue and Event Booking Policy and Council's Terms and Conditions of Let will be made available to all hirers.

Implementation of the policy will be monitored, and an annual review will take place. The policy will be refreshed every three years, or sooner if there are legislative changes which affect the policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities are covered in the policy content section.

Related documents

Additional information on legislation concerning the policy is listed Appendix 1.

Integrated impact assessment

An interim integrated impact assessment has been prepared. This will be reviewed annually, alongside reviewing the policy, to ensure all possible impacts are captured.

Risk assessment

The Council has a responsibility to comply with the relevant legislation and to ensure that adequate procedures are in place to manage that in relation to use of Council property for such purposes.

In developing the policy, officers sought external legal advice from Harper Macleod

Review

The policy will be refreshed every three years and reported back to Policy and Sustainability Committee in January 2027, or before that should changes to legislation impact on policy implementation. An annual review will also take place to confirm the policy remains up to date.

Appendix 1 – Legislation

The main pieces of legislation/guidance governing the Event Booking and Venue Hire Policy are:

- Statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#) makes explicit reference to the 'Use of local authority resources' and outlines expectations of partnership working and that local authorities should ensure that publicly-owned venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views through the establishment of a responsible booking policy for public venues.
- As a responsible authority under the [Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#), CEC has a statutory duty to work in partnership with other agencies to reduce and prevent crime. Maintaining public order is a priority for the local authority and the Police,

so when an event poses a risk to the general public there are grounds to review and reconsider venue hire.

- The [Human Rights Act 1998](#) sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms to which everyone in the UK is entitled. In some limited situations, certain freedoms are qualified meaning that public authorities may interfere with them. This is only possible where the authority can show that its action has a proper basis in law and is necessary and proportionate in order to protect public safety, public order, health or morals, the rights and freedoms of other people.
- The [Equality Act 2010](#) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, as well as advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not. The latter relate to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act came into force on 1st July 2015. The Act imposes a duty upon specified authorities to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism” and guidance anticipates that all local authorities will be partners in prevention efforts. The legislation makes explicit reference to the ‘Use of local authority resources’ and that ‘local authorities should ensure that publicly owned venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views’ through the establishment of a responsible booking policy for public venues.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998. As a responsible authority under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council has a statutory duty to work in partnership with other agencies to reduce and prevent crime. Maintaining public order is a priority for the Local Authority and the Police, therefore when an event poses a risk to the general public, there are grounds to review and reconsider venue hire.

Health & Safety Considerations. Some events can attract significant attendance with the potential for disorder outside a premise and health and safety implications for staff, visitors and residents. Local authorities may need to assess the risk, ensure appropriate measures are put in place or advise private venues accordingly.

Human Rights Act 1998. The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms to which everyone in the UK is entitled. In practice, the Act incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic British law; ensuring that law will be interpreted to uphold the Act.

In some limited situations, certain freedoms are qualified, meaning that public authorities may interfere with them:

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Specific guidance under Part 5 of the Act)

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Specific guidance under Part 1 of the Act)

ECHR – In general, public authorities may restrict the right to freedom of expression if they can show that their action has a proper basis in law, and is necessary and ‘proportionate’.

Article 9: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

Freedom to manifest one’s religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Article 10: Freedom of expression

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.

The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

Note that this includes the right to express views aloud or through:

- Published articles, books or leaflets
- Television or radio broadcasting
- Works of art
- Communication on the internet

Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association

Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

No restrictions shall be placed on the exercise of these rights other than such as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests

of national security or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. This Article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on the exercise of these rights by members of the armed forces, of the police or of the administration of the State.

Article 14: Prohibition of Discrimination.

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act

Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The latter relates to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. A 'protected characteristic' as defined in the Act includes age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

Gender Segregation

Local authorities are required to ensure they are fully familiar with their legal obligations under equality law and how this relates to their policy on gender segregation at events and meetings held on their estate or in connection with their activities. Forced gender segregation is not consistent with British values. Where it occurs on the public estate or in connection with the functions of local authorities as public bodies there is a risk this will be viewed as tolerance or even support for such practices. It is important that the relevant staff are aware of:

- the legal obligations under equality law
- what is permissible and not permissible on a segregated basis
- Exceptions from equality law for religious practice and observance:

Segregation by gender will constitute unlawful discrimination except for in a few specifically defined purposes falling within one of the exceptions under the Equality Act 2010. The general rule is that exceptions in the Act must be interpreted narrowly as they are a departure from the fundamental principle of equal treatment. Local

authorities must not knowingly facilitate discrimination by others at the request of a speaker or an individual attending or wishing to attend an event.

In order to comply with their duties under the Act, Local Authorities and their contractors should request information about the purpose of the meeting and firm detail of seating arrangements on any form used to book premises for events. If there is reason to suspect a risk of unlawful segregation, local authorities should conduct further investigation, and, if proportionate, decline any bookings for the individual or organisation concerned where this would be justified under either their Equality or Prevent duties.

[Elections in Scotland Guidance](#) has been produced by the Scottish Government for candidates and agents in relation to campaigning during elections. This maybe in the form of engaging with the public at meetings, promoting their views and responding to questions from the audience. 'Section 21: The decisions on the use of schools and other local authority properties should be for those legally responsible for the premises. Where it is decided to agree such visits, the key principle is that the same facilities should be available to all candidates, and that there is no disruption to services'.

The Equality & Human Rights Commission have published guidance for local authorities, candidates and political parties about how the legal framework for equality and human rights law operates in England, Scotland and Wales during local and national elections.