

6. Equality Outcomes as a Licensing Board

Aberdeen City Licensing Board is a relevant public body under the 2010 Act hence the Board is required to prepare and monitor the progress towards achieving Equality Outcomes in terms of Regulation 4 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The Board published their Equality outcomes in April 2021. In April 2023 the Board published a report, in accordance with its legal duties, on the progress towards achieving those outcomes.

The Licensing Board must publish progress on mainstreaming and a new set of outcomes by April 2025.

6.1 Aberdeen City Council Licensing Board (2021-2025)

Licensing Equality Outcome 1

Developing the Licensing process to ensure fair access for all, including the development of electronic applications and payments and the implementation of hybrid Licensing Board meetings.

Key Achievements

1. All meetings of the Licensing Board are now hybrid. Meetings are now held in either the Council Chamber or Committee Room 2 which allows access to the relevant equipment to allow participation in hybrid meetings since 2022.
2. The hybrid model of meetings has offered applicants, representatives and Board Members the choice and flexibility to attend meetings in-person or remotely online.
3. The Council Chamber and Committee Room 2 are accessible to wheelchair users and persons with restricted mobility as there is a lift located close to the entrance to the building, which itself has wheelchair accessibility outside.
4. Meeting rooms have hearing loop facilities for persons with hearing impairment who use hearing aid devices.
5. Electronic Applications and Payments. In addition to accepting applications by post, applications can be sent by email. Payments in respect of applications can also be made electronically on the Council's Civic payment portal offering more choices on how payments can be made.

Licensing Equality Outcome 2

Licensing Board works in partnership with a range of stakeholders to ensure the most effective decisions are made to meet the aims of the Board and also works with license holders and other Council services to support positive behaviour on and around license premises.

Key Achievements

1. The Licensing Board published a new [Statement of Licensing Policy](#) in November 2023. The Policy gives the Board a solid framework to make the right decisions at the right time, always with the five licensing objectives at the forefront of their thinking. The Policy also sets out what the Board expects of licence holders. The Board carried out a consultation on the Policy and a range of stakeholders contributed to its development.
2. The Local Licensing Forum keeps the operation of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 under review and gives advice and makes recommendations to the Licensing Board. The Board

must have regard to any advice given, or recommendations made by the Forum, and where the Board decides not to follow the advice or recommendation, it must give the Forum reasons for the decision.

3. The Board and Forum hold a joint meeting on an annual basis.
4. The Board works with a range of stakeholders on an ongoing basis. The stakeholders include Police Scotland, Grampian Health Board, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Community Councils, and licence holders.
5. Licensing Standard Officers (LSOs) work with licence holders to ensure compliance with licence conditions and to promote good practices in and around licenced premises. The LSOs work with a range of partners including but not limited to Police Scotland, Environmental Health and Trading Standards. LSOs will carry out inspection visits to licensed premises and where necessary can issue compliance notices and report to the Licensing Board any concerns they may have about a particular premises.

Next Steps

The next steps will be determined by the Licensing Board and will be reported on as part of the progress report in 2027.

7. Setting our outcomes for Mainstreaming Equality – looking ahead 2025-2029

Specific duty regulation (Regulation 4) as set in the Equality Act stipulates that listed authorities should take reasonable steps to involve persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and any person who appears to the authority to represent the interests of those persons; and should consider relevant evidence relating to persons who share a relevant protected characteristic.

7.1 Methodology

To develop our next set of outcomes, we have reviewed our progress against our current outcomes to understand what has gone well and what can be done better. We have also looked at what will be achievable within our resources.

1. We have also considered available local and national equalities evidence,
2. We reflected on our previous equalities work to establish if it is still fit for purpose,
3. We have undertaken extensive community engagement, through surveys, in person and online meetings with groups within our communities.
4. We have used feedback from our employee equality working groups and responses from our recent employee survey to address trends and needs.

7.2 Proportionality and relevance

The outcomes have been set based on proportionality and relevance to focus on areas where there has been persistent inequality and will support us in advancing the needs as stated in the General Duty within the restraints of public spending.