**Equality and Diversity**

Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to equality for all people within our communities. Together, diversity, equality and inclusion are important principles that promote fairness, respect and understanding within society. Embracing these principles creates an inclusive environment where everyone feels respected and valued.

***Equality*** - This means that everyone is included in everything including all relevant policies, procedures and practices. It means that everyone is treated equal and fairly and has the same opportunities.
***Diversity*** - This means appreciating the uniqueness of individuals and seeing the benefits of that uniqueness. In the workplace, it is important that we celebrate people's differences and include everyone within the Team.

The Equality Act was introduced as law on 1st October 2010 and offers protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation for nine specific personal characteristics. These are known are “Protected Characteristics” which are detailed further below. It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a protected characteristic. Further information can be obtained here [Protected characteristics | EHRC](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/protected-characteristics)

***Age*** - A person belonging to a particular age or range of ages.

***Disability*** – a person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

***Gender reassignment*** – where a person undergoes, or proposed to undergo, a process for the purpose of reassigning their sex.

***Marriage and civil partnership*** - Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

***Pregnancy and maternity*** - Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

***Race*** - A race is a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnicity or national origins. A racial group can be made up of more than one distinct racial group, such as Black British.

***Religion or belief*** - Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

***Sex*** - A man or a woman.

***Sexual orientation*** - Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

On 28 June 2022, the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022 came into effect which introduced new (and amended existing) legislation for taxi and private hire car drivers and operators in respect of disabled passengers. The Licensing Authority has created guidance to assist driver and operators generally with regard to their legal obligations. Further information can be found here [Wheelchair accessible taxi and private hire vehicles - Dumfries and Galloway Council](https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/25684/Wheelchair-accessible-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicles)

Further, in relation to assistance/guide dogs, condition number 3 attached to all taxi/private hire driver licences states:

*3. Where the taxi has been hired –*

*(1) (a) by or for a disabled person who is accompanied by a guide dog, a hearing dog or an assistance dog of that person; or*

*(b)   by a person who wishes such a disabled person to accompany that person in the taxi and the circumstances specified below do not apply, the driver of the taxi shall carry the disabled person’s dog and allow it to remain with the disabled person and shall not make any additional charge for doing so.*

*(2) The circumstances referred to above are that –*

*(a)  a notice of exemption in the form set out in the Schedule to the Taxi Drivers’ Licences (Carrying of Guide Dogs and Hearing Dogs) (Scotland) Regulations 2003 has been issued to the driver in accordance with the procedure set out in regulation 6 of said regulations and is in force; and*

*(b)  that notice is exhibited either (i) affixing it in a prominent position on the dashboard facing upwards; or (ii) affixing it to the windscreen of the taxi, facing outwards.*

If you require further information in respect of equality and diversity whilst undertaking your role as a taxi or private hire driver, please do not hesitate to contact the Licensing Service.