

Lohja – a city for all

Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan 2025–2029

Approved by the City Board, August 11, 2025

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1. Foreword

The mission of the City of Lohja's urban strategy is that Lohja is a sustainably growing lake city, where it is possible to make the dream of a Finnish way of life come true. The vision is that Lohja is a vibrant city with a metropolitan area in rural surroundings, known as the preferred choice of people who enjoy life.

In practice, all the things mentioned above mean that Lohja is a city where one's heart feels at home and everyone can enjoy life in their own style and according to their own preferences. The basics of everyday life are in order and daily life runs smoothly.

Equality and non-discrimination are at the core of these objectives. Easy access to services, smooth decision-making and inclusion affect residents' well-being and everyday life. When people feel heard and appreciated, they feel safe. At the same time, this strengthens trust in the city's operations.

In line with its strategy, Lohja wants to be a city that makes sustainable choices and has the courage to renew itself and grow. The strategy also requires the courage to challenge existing ways of doing things and to raise and engage in debates. To achieve these goals, we also need courage and permission to fail and willingness to learn from our mistakes.

The basic values of Lohja are visible throughout the city's operations. Shared values lead us towards a better city – towards one that belongs to all of us.

The Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan of the City of Lohja was built based on the views provided by the city's residents. When the plan was being drawn up, city residents had the opportunity to present development targets for promoting equality and non-discrimination. With these choices, the city wanted to strengthen the resident-oriented approach of the plan and the correct targeting of the measures in such a manner that the results of development work are visible in both the quality of the services and the city's activities.

The Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan guides all actors in the city to work for our common city so that taking the perspective of equality and non-discrimination into account is a natural part of service provision, preparation of decisions and decision-making.

I would like to extend my warm thanks to the city's residents, political factions, lobbying bodies, city divisions and other parties involved who, with your views, contributed to the preparation of this plan.

Pasi Perämäki,
City Manager



2. Introduction

The Local Government Act (410/2015) obliges the city to promote the well-being of its residents and sustainable development.

As prerequisites of everyday well-being, the equality and non-discrimination of Lohja residents are part of the principle of social sustainability and an important factor contributing to the vitality and attractiveness of the city. The services provided to the residents and the decisions made by the city affect people's everyday lives in many ways. Thanks to the statutory tasks and functions being provided close to the people, the city has the prerequisites and special obligations to promote equality and non-discrimination and to prevent discrimination. To promote this goal, the City of Lohja has prepared its first equality and non-discrimination plan concerning the city's services for the period 2025–2029. We do not content ourselves with words alone. We want to take the right actions to promote sustainable development, increase equality and reduce inequalities.

The equality and non-discrimination work of the City of Lohja is linked to the following focus areas of the city strategy 2023–2030: Prosperous and capable of learning; Excellently located; and Known for its nature. We are committed to promoting sustainable development in different ways.

We want to improve the rights and well-being of our residents and strengthen our support for vulnerable groups.

“Targeted measures are needed in order to reach substantive equality.”
workshop participant

We are developing the city so that our good location would better serve the needs of housing and provision of services in different parts of Lohja. The equality and non-discrimination plan concerning the city's services for 2025–2029 has been prepared as a single entity instead of two separate plans (an equality plan and a non-discrimination plan).

Through combining the plans, the aim is to address intersectional inequalities and multiple discrimination in particular.

Intersecting inequality means that a person's status in society is simultaneously influenced by several factors. These factors may include gender, social class, age, ethnicity, functional capacity, disability, language and sexual orientation.

Discrimination on multiple grounds refers to being discriminated against on the basis of two or more different characteristics. Taking intersectional inequalities into account helps to identify multiple discrimination, which is vital for preventing discrimination.

Promoting equality and non-discrimination is a continuous operational process that creates and safeguards the preconditions of a good life for residents in different life situations.

3. Development targets and measures for 2025–2029

As a service provider, we play a key role in how well equality and non-discrimination are realised in the city's services in practice. The realisation of the objectives and measures of the plan in everyday work is reflected in improved quality of the services provided to the city's residents. High-quality services are provided to all equally and on equal grounds.

Over the next four years, we will contribute to strengthening equality and preventing discrimination in city services through the following themes:

1. The perspective of equality and non-discrimination will be extended to all activities
2. The encounters with and inclusion of residents will be strengthened, taking special account of vulnerable groups and groups at risk of being subjected to discrimination.
3. Awareness and competence related to equality and non-discrimination will be deepened to eliminate prejudices based on different population groups.

In 2025–2029, the various divisions of the City of Lohja will implement the measures below, presented on pages 5–9.





Group services

Development target	Measure	Indicator	Responsible party
The competence of employees will be strengthened to ensure sensitive customer encounters and reduce prejudices.	Regular accessibility training will be available for all city employees.	Continuous training opportunities available.	Personnel services
	Regular training on human rights, equality and non-discrimination themes will be available for all city employees.	Continuous training opportunities available.	
	More short briefings on such themes as equality, non-discrimination and accessibility will be provided for city employees.	Briefings held.	
The competence of elected officials and decision-making parties on equality, non-discrimination and accessibility will be strengthened.	Equality and non-discrimination training will be organised for elected officials and decision-makers.	Training implemented by council period.	Information, administration and development services
Equality and non-discrimination will be promoted in the city's recruitment.	A pilot on anonymous recruitment will be carried out.	Pilot completed.	Personnel services
The principles of a safer space will be made more visible.	The principles of safer space will be introduced in the city's premises and events.	The principles of safer space have been introduced and put on display.	Information, administration and development services

Group services



Development target	Measure	Indicator	Responsible party
Strengthening customer orientation	Multi-channel approach and accessibility will be taken into account in collecting customer feedback and opinions of residents.	Multi-channel approach and accessibility have been taken into account.	Administrative services
	Training will be warranged for receiving customer feedback and responding to customer feedback.	Training organised.	
The perspective of equality and non-discrimination will be strengthened in the content production of different communication channels.	The consideration of diversity and norm awareness will be strengthened in content production, for example with regard to performers and illustrations.	Descriptions implemented. Illustrations and videos introduced. Number of performers.	Administrative services
The linguistic rights of residents in accessing services will be strengthened.	Training will be organised to strengthen competence in Swedish.	Training implemented.	Personnel services
Digital exclusion will be prevented.	Continuing production of non-digital content will be ensured.	An assessment of the adequacy of non-digital communications has been made.	Administrative services
The perspectives of accessibility will be strengthened in committees and councils.	Elected officials will be provided with improved knowledge of lobbying bodies. The activities of accessibility specialists will be presented to the bodies of elected officials in each council term.	Presentations done.	Information management and development services, Council on Disabilities



Group services

Development target	Measure	Indicator	Responsible party
Communication on the work on equality and non-discrimination related to the city's everyday activities will be strengthened.	Communication on the work to promote equality and non-discrimination in the city's divisions' daily activities will be strengthened.	Number and reach of publications. Media coverage concerning Lohja on the subject of equality work. The results of the resident survey on the success of equality work and the realisation of equality in the city's services is improving (in 2024, 3.0/5).	Information management and development services, administrative services
Gender diversity and diverse relationships	Taken into account in forms.	Forms updated.	Administrative services
Resident participation to be strengthened in the planning of activities.	Resident panel will be used in the planning of services.	Implemented resident panels.	Administrative services
Communicating about national events promoting human rights	The City of Lohja will create its own instructions for flying the flag.	Instructions for flying the flag prepared.	Administrative services urban structure
Measures to promote equality and non-discrimination to be complemented	The measures to and at the division-level promote equality and non-discrimination in group services will be mapped using workshop methods. Based on the survey, the group services and city divisions will complement the equality and non-discrimination plan.	Implemented workshops in group services, and in the urban structure and cultural divisions.	Information management and development services

Urban structure



Development target	Measure	Indicator	Responsible party
Gender-neutral toilet facilities	To be taken into consideration in new construction, repairs and project plans.	Considered in new construction, repairs and project plans	Centre for Real Estate and Facility Management
The safety and accessibility of the built environment to be enhanced	Lighting will be enhanced in urban areas considered unsafe by residents.	The number of actions taken.	Urban technology, Centre for Real Estate and Facility Management
	Accessibility will be taken into account in planning and implementation.	The statement of accessibility experts has been taken into account in the planning and implementation.	Land use and logistics services, Centre for Real Estate and Facility Management
Development of public transport	Accessibility will be taken into account in competitive tendering of public transport as far as possible.	Considered in the tendering process.	Land use and logistics services
Regional segregation will be prevented	Will be taken into account in urban planning as far as possible.	Considered in urban planning.	Land use and logistics services, Centre for Real Estate and Facility Management
The situations and perspectives of disadvantaged population groups and different minority groups to be taken into account both in decision-making and in the planning of services.	A participatory model will be created for multicultural residents.	Model created.	Employment services

Education

Development target	Measure	Indicator	Responsible party
The voice of minorities will be reinforced and the threshold for participation lowered.	An annual event to actively promote interaction between different population groups will be arranged.	Event implemented.	Cultural services
	Cultural and other city facilities will be made familiar (e.g. Laurentius House) for residents with an immigrant background in particular.	Sites to visit and number of participants.	
Zero tolerance of harassment and discrimination, especially harassment related to gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.	Training on harassment will be increased.	Number of training events and number of participants per unit.	Early childhood education and care, basic education, joint education services (upper secondary education)
	Pupils and students will be provided with enhanced opportunities to bring up any experiences of harassment	Pupils, students and guardians have been informed of how to intervene in harassment and who can be notified if harassment occurs.	
Equal treatment of pupils and guardians	Will be considered in unit-level plans	Considered in unit-level plans	
Bilingualism to be strengthened	Cooperation between Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking early childhood education and care, basic education and upper secondary education units will be encouraged in different forms.	Actual cooperation	

4. Evaluation and reporting

The plan is made for each City Council term. The Mayor is responsible for the implementation of equality and non-discrimination work.

The implementation of the plan is reported during the plan period in connection with annual reporting of Welfare Plans. The plan will be updated if necessary.

“What we do indicates our values.”
workshop participant



5. City as a promoter of equality and non-discrimination §

The city's mission to promote equality is based on the Act on Equality between Women and Men (609/1986). According to the Act, as a body exercising public authority, the municipality must promote gender equality and prevent discrimination based on it in all its activities. From 2015, the promotion obligation and the prohibition of discrimination referred to in the Act were extended from gender to also include gender identity and gender expression. On the other hand, the city's task

to promote equality and prevent discrimination is based on the Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014). The Act prohibits any discrimination based on age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics.

In addition to direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, denial of reasonable accommodation as well as an instruction or order to discriminate constitute discrimination under this Act.

In practice, the task of promoting equality often refers to measures to promote effective equality.

Under the aforementioned acts, the city must promote equality and non-discrimination as a body acting as an authority, service provider, education provider and employer. The Equality Act and Non-Discrimination Act oblige different actors to promote equality and non-discrimination and to prevent discrimination in a systematic and goal-oriented manner. For the city, the Equality

and Non-Discrimination Plan is a tool for planning and implementing statutory obligations as well as for assessing and monitoring their realisation.

In accordance with the statutory equality and non-discrimination obligations, the City of Lohja has the following plans:

1. an employer plan for an equal personnel policy
2. educational institution-specific equality and non-discrimination plans for education providers
3. so-called operational equality and non-discrimination plan concerning the equality and non-discrimination in the city's activities and services, as referred to in this document.



5.1 Survey of the current state

The plan is based on a survey of the current state, which was carried out in autumn 2024 and spring 2025 in cooperation with the city residents and lobbying bodies. The survey identified key development targets for the realisation of equality and non-discrimination in the services of the City of Lohja.

Resident survey

The resident survey collected residents' experiences of using the services of the City of Lohja and their thoughts on how equality and non-discrimination could be promoted in the city's activities. It was possible to respond to the survey between 21 October and 10 November 2024. Responding was possible in three different languages either online or using a paper form. The main library and local libraries of Lohja and the customer service of City Hall Monkola served as distribution and return locations for paper forms.

Responses were received from 429 people (women 70.9%, men 23.9%, other 0.5%, non-binary 0.9% prefer not to specify 3.8%). The results indicate that generally the quality of service was considered good, as the majority of the respondents (61%) felt that the services were provided fairly and they had not experienced discrimination in them over the past two years. However, 39% of the respondents had experienced discrimination and/or inappropriate treatment in services.

They had encountered discrimination mostly based on their opinion, health, age or gender. The open responses also revealed discrimination due to language, sexual orientation and gender identity.

The open responses highlighted residents' wishes to strengthen resident participation in the planning of services and activities, and decision-making on them; observing diversity in the planning of events and communication; and an equal distribution of resources and prioritisations between residential areas.

The results of the survey and the workshop show that there is room for improvement in the quality of services and that signs of shortcomings in equality and non-discrimination can be detected in them.

The residents' open responses produced experience-based information on the quality of services and important proposals for improving the city's services.

“The right to be heard is important.”
survey respondent

Event for city residents

In February 2025, the city organised a workshop for residents.

The residents were informed about the workshop on the city's website, on the bulletin boards of libraries, on the electronic bulletin board of the City Hall, via Facebook

and Instagram and in local newspapers. All city councillors, members of the Council on Disability, the Elderly Citizens Council and the Youth Council were also separately invited to the workshop by email.

The workshop mapped development targets and concrete development measures. The event was attended by 16 residents. The participants were asked to give feedback on the workshop. On a scale of 1 to 5, the average grade given to the workshop was 4.4. As key themes needing development the workshop raised engagement, communication, language, accessibility and vulnerable groups. The results of the survey and the workshop on the development targets in the city's services are similar. In the participants' opinion, effective equality is realised at many different levels: at the level of residents, office holders, employees and elected officials.

Contacts received by the Offices of the Ombudsman for Equality and the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman

As part of the survey, it was investigated how many complaints concerning the City of Lohja the Offices of the Ombudsman for Equality and the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman had registered between 2022 and 2024.

No matters concerning the City of Lohja had been registered in the case register of the Ombudsman for Equality during the period.

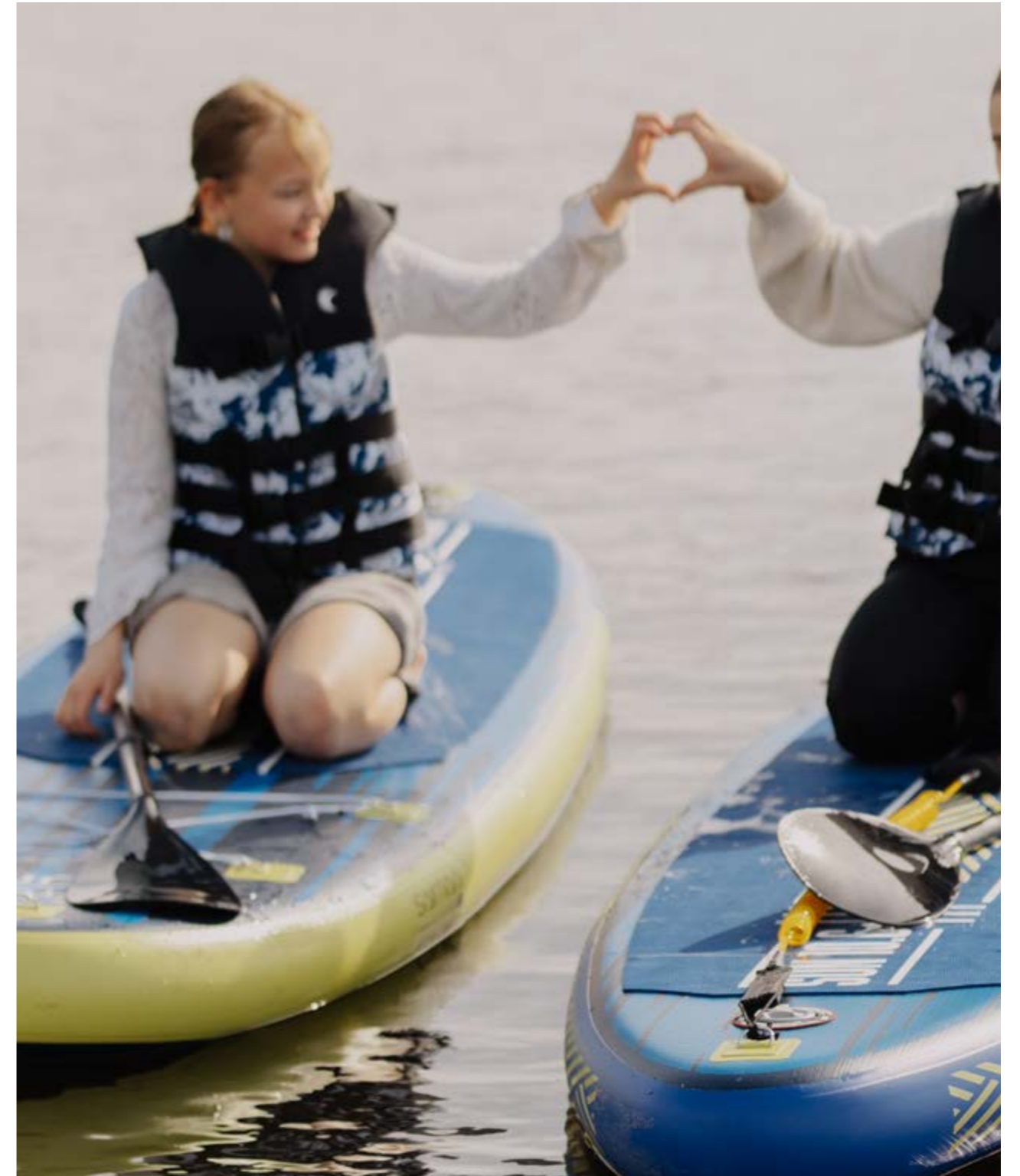
The Office of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman had received two complaints concerning the City of Lohja during the period.



“There is non-discrimination at different levels – it can appear in decision-making and in everyone’s personal activity.”
workshop participant

5.2 Consideration of the matter in the city’s organs

The plan was discussed by lobbying bodies and approved by the city committees during spring and summer 2025. The committees approved the development targets and measures for 2025–2029.





6. Final word by the chairs

A diverse and prosperous population with confidence in its opportunities is Lohja's strength. The Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan is an important step towards a fairer and more equal Lohja. Achieving the goals of the plan requires active participation and commitment from all of us. We hope that the plan will serve as an inspiration and guideline for all residents and the city organisation as a whole.

Promoting equality and non-discrimination is a continuous process. This plan is the basis for work that must live and develop according to time and needs. This work must also be developed with determination. We hope that the objectives and measures of the plan will be put to practice and that together we can create an even more equal community.

The most important thing is that the plan raises debate and encourages us all to talk about equality, non-discrimination and human rights. We hope that the plan will help us understand each other better and create a community together that allows everyone to give their best.

We want to thank the entire equality and non-discrimination plan working group for your important work to improve the services of the City of Lohja. Our thanks also go to the office holders who have been working on this plan with us.

We want to defend everyone's freedom to lead a life that looks like their own. A safe and good city is not self-evident. Equality and non-discrimination do not progress on their own but require determined work and commitment. This plan will advance our commitment to equality and non-discrimination throughout the city organisation.

On behalf of the Equality and Non-Discrimination Working Group

Birgit Aittakumpu

Chair of the Equality and Non-Discrimination Working Group

Hilkka Hyrkkö

Vice Chair of the Equality and Non-Discrimination Working Group

7. Glossary

Concepts related to gender equality and non-discrimination:

ableism

Ableism refers to the assumption that all people are non-disabled. This makes being non-disabled the norm. Ableism is reflected in our approaches and attitudes towards people with disabilities. We may, for example, doubt the competence or ability of a person with a disability to manage various tasks.

anti-racism

Anti-racism is active and conscious action against all forms of racism. Anti-racism means working to reduce ethnic discrimination, the effects of discriminatory practices, and negative prejudice.

resident panel

The resident panel is a method of involving local residents to improve the opportunities of residents, communities, associations and companies to participate and influence municipal activities and their development.

binary/non-binary

A binary conception of gender refers to a way of thinking in which there is considered to be only two genders, women and men. For example, non-binary people identify outside this division.

digital exclusion

Digital exclusion refers to the risk of being excluded from digital services. In particular, many older people may experience challenges of varying degrees in using digital services.

prejudice

Prejudice refers to assumption or perception that was formed before

getting to know a person, subject or phenomenon. Prejudices may be based, for example, on ignorance or stereotypes. Prejudices may also be unconscious. Prejudices are often directed at an entire group of people, such as a minority or a religious group.

accessibility

Accessibility traditionally refers to taking all kinds of people into account in the physical environment. Accessible buildings and accessible public transport, for example, enable persons with disabilities to work and engage in recreational activities. Accessibility of digital services is often referred to as access to services.

ethnic group

A group of people whose members are united, for example, by cultural heritage, religion, language, origin or appearance. Ethnicity is often only associated with brown people, even though all people have ethnicity – including white groups of people.

harassment

Harassment is discrimination that is prohibited under the Non-Discrimination Act. The law defines harassment as the deliberate or de facto infringement of the dignity of a person. This type of behaviour creates a degrading, humiliating, intimidating, hostile or offensive environment related to the prohibited grounds of discrimination.



age discrimination

Age discrimination refers to discrimination based on age. Age as the grounds of discrimination covers all ages. Age discrimination often manifests itself as age limits set without an acceptable reason. It may mean, for example, that young people are not admitted to a self-service library or a petrol station, or those aged 65 or over cannot apply for positions of responsibility in an association.

reasonable accommodation

Reasonable accommodation refers to necessary and appropriate changes and arrangements made in individual cases that do not impose a disproportionate or unreasonable burden and ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy or use all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others.

LGBTIQ

LGBTIQ is a uniting acronym used of people who have identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer. Many variants of the acronym are used depending on which groups the speaker is referring to. It can be used to describe groups whose sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity differs from the norm. The acronym is mostly written in the form LHBTIQ and in Swedish hbtq.

diversity

Diversity is based on the idea of a society where different individuals and communities respect and accept the differences between each other. Diversity means that differences of this kind that are closely related to an individual's identity are fostered in a safe and positive atmosphere. In a diverse society, communities formed by different people are encouraged to

engage in dialogue with each other for the common good.

multiple discrimination

Multiple discrimination refers to a situation where a person encounters discrimination in the same situation based on several different grounds or in more than one situation for different reasons. One factor alone may not even be enough to explain why discrimination occurs.

norm awareness

The critical examination of prevailing societal norms, i.e. active action to dismantle prevailing norms. The term 'norm awareness' can also be used instead of 'norm criticism'. Using the term 'awareness' shows that not all societal norms necessarily need to be criticised, but their existence is still acknowledged. The prevailing norms reflect the world view of the majority of people, which is why the perspective of minorities is easily ignored in services, or people belonging to a minority may be treated differently.

instruction or order to discriminate

An instruction or order to discriminate is illegal. For example, a supervisor is guilty of discrimination if they instruct the employees of a shop not to serve customers with a foreign background. This is discrimination even if the employee has not yet acted on the instructions. Acting on an instruction or order to discriminate is also discrimination.

inclusion

Inclusion is about belonging and being heard. At the individual level, inclusion is manifested, for example, as an experience that emerges when a person feels that they belong to a group that they find meaningful. At the community level, inclusion manifests as mutual

respect between members of the community and as the opportunity to have an influence in one's own community. At the societal level, inclusion refers to the realisation of possibilities and rights. At the policy level, inclusion refers to measures that strengthen people's inclusion in society.

structural discrimination

Structural discrimination refers to discrimination that is hidden in society's activities, laws and services, such as discriminatory practices and processes in working life, education and services, in which organisations, companies and agencies discriminate directly or indirectly against certain groups of people. Structural discrimination is often unconscious. It can manifest as seemingly neutral practices that, in reality, exclude people who are considered to be different from the majority population.

racism

Racism is a way of thinking in which groups of people are defined as inferior based on, for example, ethnicity, skin colour, nationality, culture, mother tongue, or religion. Racism may manifest in different areas of society as intentional or unintentional behaviour between individuals and groups that is based on prejudice and fear of the other or as discriminatory practices in the societal structures. Racism maintains inequality and damages not only its targets but also society as a whole.

accessibility

Accessibility means that as many different people as possible can access websites and mobile applications as easily as possible. Accessibility means taking people's diversity into account in the design and implementation of websites and mobile applications.

segregation

Segregation means the same as differentiation. Regional segregation refers to the differentiation of the population structure between the residential areas of a city. Segregation may also take place in education or working life based on, for example, a social class, ethnicity or religion.

sexual orientation

Sexual orientation usually refers to who the person is attracted to or falls in love with, or who they have sex with. A person's sexual orientation may consist of different parts: identity, preferences and practice. A person's perception of their own sexual orientation is not necessarily permanent but can change during life. Examples of sexual orientation include heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality and pansexuality. The term gender orientation is no longer used.

sensitive encounters

Sensitive encounters are interactions in which individuals are encountered openly and respectfully as they are. Sensitive encounters consist of, for example, a respectful way of speaking, strengthening a confidential and safe atmosphere and taking the customer's special needs into account.



gender-based harassment

Gender-based harassment refers to unwanted behaviour related to an individual's gender that is not sexual in nature, and which intentionally or effectively violates their mental or physical integrity and creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or distressing atmosphere. Gender-based harassment may include degrading name-calling related to gender.

gender expression

Gender expression means expressing one's gender by way of dressing, behaviour or other similar means. The expression may comply with or differ from traditional gender standards. Discrimination based on gender expression is prohibited under the Equality Act.

gender identity

Gender identity refers to a person's experience of their gender. Gender identity is individual and does not necessarily correspond to the gender assigned for the person at birth. Discrimination based on gender identity is prohibited under the Equality Act.

gender diversity

Gender diversity refers to the diversity of different gender experiences and ways of expressing gender. Gender diversity is part of all people in one way or another, and it cannot be limited to apply to a specific group of people only.

gender identity

Gender identity refers to a person's conception of their own gender. Gender identity is individual and does not necessarily correspond to the gender assigned for the person at birth. It is not necessarily limited to only two legal genders. At the individual level,

self-determined gender identity is the preferred way to understand gender. Discrimination based on gender identity is prohibited under the Equality Act.

gender responsiveness or gender sensitivity

Gender responsiveness, or gender sensitivity, refers to recognising assumptions, prejudices and perceptions culturally and socially associated with different genders in everyday activities and ways of speaking. Gender responsiveness also includes recognising gender stereotypes and assessing them critically as well as awareness of gender diversity.

discrimination

Discrimination means that a person is treated less favourably than others or is put in a less favourable position based on a personal characteristic without an acceptable reason.

principles of a safer space

A space where the principles of a safer space are actively applied and users are required to commit to them. Those responsible for the space will intervene in all types of harassment and discrimination. The principles and operating methods of a safer space aim to create a space where everyone strives to build an equal, respectful and open atmosphere and debate through their own actions.

person with a disability

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

indirect discrimination

Discrimination can be indirect. Indirect discrimination means that an apparently neutral rule, criterion or practice puts a person at a disadvantage compared to others based on their personal characteristics. An example of indirect discrimination can be an inaccessible environment. It may, for example, constitute indirect discrimination if an authority's or service provider's office cannot be accessed by a person who uses a wheelchair or other assistive device.

direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated worse than someone else in a similar situation due to a personal characteristic. An example of this type of direct discrimination is when a Roma customer is ordered to pay for their food prior to being served when other customers are not. Another example is when a same-sex couple is not rented an apartment due to their sexual orientation.

**Sources**

Ministry of Justice Finland
Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare
Non-discrimination ombudsman



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City of Lakes