

Equal Opportunities Policy – Employees and applicants for employment

- 1.1 The Council is an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to ensuring within the framework of the law that our workplaces are free from unlawful or unfair discrimination because of Protected Characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. We have adopted this policy as a means of helping to achieve these aims.
- 1.2 The Protected Characteristics are –
 - 1.2.1 Age
 - 1.2.2 Disability
 - 1.2.3 Gender Reassignment
 - 1.2.4 Race
 - 1.2.5 Religion or Belief
 - 1.2.6 Sex
 - 1.2.7 Sexual Orientation
 - 1.2.8 Marriage and Civil Partnership
 - 1.2.9 Pregnancy and Maternity

We aim to ensure that our employees achieve their full potential and that all employment decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or discriminatory criteria.

2. What is unlawful discrimination?

- 2.1 **Direct discrimination** – when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a Protected Characteristic.
- 2.2 **Associative discrimination or discrimination by association** – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic.
- 2.3 **Discrimination by perception** – direct discrimination against someone because it is thought that they possess a particular Protected Characteristic even if they do not actually possess it.
- 2.4 **Indirect discrimination** - occurs where an individual's employment is subject to an unjustified provision criterion or practice which e.g. one sex or race or nationality or age group finds more difficult to meet, although on the face of it the provision, criterion or practice is 'neutral'.

- 2.5 **Harassment** – unwanted conduct related to a relevant Protected Characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. You may complain of such offensive behaviour even if it is not directed towards you personally.
- 2.6 **Harassment by a third party** – harassment of employees by third parties such as customers or clients.
- 2.7 **Victimisation** – when an employee is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance about unlawful discrimination or are suspected of doing so.

3. Commitment

- 3.1 The Town Council is committed to promoting equality and diversity, providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all. In the implementation of this policy the Town Council will ensure;
 - 3.1.1 That all our employees and applicants for employment are protected from unlawful discrimination in employment.
 - 3.1.2 That recruitment and employment decisions will be made on the basis of fair and objective criteria.
 - 3.1.3 That person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the job.
 - 3.1.4 That interviews are conducted on an objective basis and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary and relevant.
 - 3.1.5 That all employees have a right to equality of opportunity and a duty to implement this policy. Discrimination is a serious disciplinary matter which will normally be treated as gross misconduct.
 - 3.1.6 That people are treated solely on the basis of their abilities and potential, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious or political belief or affiliation, trade union membership, age, gender reassignment, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic background, or any other inappropriate distinction.
 - 3.1.7 That part time staff are treated fairly and equally.
 - 3.1.8 The promotion of an environment free of harassment and bullying on any grounds.

- 3.2 The Council recognises that training and development are crucial to ensuring that officers have the skill, knowledge and appropriate behaviour to implement its Equal Opportunities Policies.
- 3.3 Disciplinary action under the disciplinary procedure shall be taken against any employee who is found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination. Discriminatory conduct and sexual or racial harassment shall be regarded as gross misconduct.
- 3.4 Anyone who believes that he or she may have been disadvantaged on discriminatory grounds should raise the matter through the Council's grievance procedure.

4. Responsibility for Implementation

- 4.1 The Town Council has ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of the policy. The policy will be reviewed by the Human Resources Committee at least every two years. The Town Clerk will oversee the implementation of this policy. The Town Clerk has delegated responsibility for co-ordinating the day to day operation of the policies and procedures.