

Ash Parish Council



Equality and Diversity Policy

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Equality and Diversity Policy

This policy's purpose is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
2. Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of :
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes:
 - Pay and benefits.
 - Terms and conditions of employment
 - Dealing with grievances and discipline
 - Dismissal
 - Redundancy
 - Selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

To our service users :

Promoting equalities is about putting principles into practice. These are our commitments to all users.

We have a key role to provide relevant and accessible services that meet the needs of all members of our community. We aim to ensure that high standards of quality and equality are maintained. We aim to improve access to all.

Every service user :

- Has the right to receive appropriate, accessible services that are free from discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.
- Has the right to be treated with respect and provided with accurate and up to date information about the Council's services.
- Should feel enabled to access Council services and not feel excluded because of their age, disability, ethnic background or skin colour, faith, gender, health, language, cultural, social or economic background or sexual orientation.
- Has our assurance that service contracts will incorporate equalities principles.
- Has the right to give feedback or raise complaints about services through clear and easy to use complaints procedures.

To our employees :

We are an equal opportunities employer and are committed to a policy of treating all our employees and job applicants equally.

It is our policy to take all reasonable steps to employ and promote employees based on their abilities and qualifications without regard to race, religion, colour, sex, age, nation of origin, membership or non-membership of a trade union, disability, marital status, ethnic origin, nationality, or sexual orientation.

We will appoint, train, develop, and promote based on merit and ability alone.

Employees must not harass or intimidate any employee on the grounds of race, religion, colour, sex, age, nation of origin, membership or non-membership of a trade union, disability, marital status, ethnic origin, nationality, or sexual orientation. Such behaviour may be treated as gross misconduct in accordance with our disciplinary procedure.

Employees must not victimise or harass any employee who has made allegations or complaints or sexual or racial discrimination or discrimination on the grounds of disability or sexual orientation. Such behaviour may be treated as gross misconduct in accordance with our disciplinary procedure.

This policy applies to the advertisement of jobs, recruitment and appointment to them, training, conditions of work, pay and to every other aspect of employment. This policy also applies equally to members of the public who use our services.

The Parish Council is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

The organisation - in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities - is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public.

Our commitments

The Parish commits to :

Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.

Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.

Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others during the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Make decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).

Review employment practices and procedures to ensure compliance with legal changes and best practices.

Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

Our disciplinary and grievance procedures

Details of the organisation's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found in the staff handbook. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance usually the Clerk.

Use of the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

Statutory obligations

The Parish Council will meet all statutory obligations under relevant legislation and, where appropriate, anticipate future legal requirements. This will be informed by:

- The Equality Act (2010).
- Criminal Justice and Immigration Act (2008).
- The Racial and Religious Hatred Act (2006).
- The Civil Partnership Act (2004).
- The Gender Recognition Act (2004).
- Criminal Justice Act (2003).
- The Human Rights Act (1998).
- The Protection from Harassment Act (1997).
- Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2001).

In addition, this will be informed by the Codes of Practice or Guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and other relevant bodies. These Codes are not legally binding (though they are admissible as evidence in Employment Tribunals) and the Parish Council supports them fully.

This policy will be amended as appropriate to meet the demands of future legislation.