

Woodcote Parish Council Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

Woodcote Parish Council aims to ensure the equal opportunities and treatment of all its employees, councillors, job applicants, volunteers and any other individuals connected with, or working with, the Council. The Equality Act 2010 took effect on 1 October and replaces the previous anti-discrimination legislation, simplifying the law and removing inconsistencies.

The public sector Equality duty is a key measure in the Act which came into force on 5th April 2011. All public bodies and organisations carrying out public functions have a duty to consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees. There are a wide range of statutory rights and obligations, derived from this Parliamentary Act and despite any express term of contract, they cannot be waived. It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the grounds of the following protected “characteristics” as defined under the Equality Act 2010 (specific duties) Regulations 2011.

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

This list is not exhaustive but serves to reflect the intention of this policy.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all individuals, irrespective of their characteristics (unless there are genuine occupational qualifications or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken). We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation, bullying or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

SCOPE

The Council, its councillors and employees all have a duty both morally and legally not to unfairly discriminate against individuals. They all hold a personal responsibility for the practical application of the equality of opportunity across the Council. It is accepted that Councillors are not employees, but they do share a responsibility with employees when representing the Council or carrying out the functions of their office, therefore all aspects of this policy apply to

members. All employees and volunteers whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the council.

OUR COMMITMENT

Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

The Council recognises that training and development may be required to ensure that councillors and officers have the knowledge and appropriate behaviour to implement its Equality and Diversity Policy.

The commitment to equal opportunities in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense as it seeks to utilise the talents available from the local community, representing society as a whole.

BREACHES

Breaches of our Equality and Diversity Policy by employees will be regarded as serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

If there is any doubt about appropriate treatment under the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy, employees should consult their line manager or the Parish Clerk.

Members of the public should refer to the Council's Complaints Procedure.

UPDATES AND REVIEW

The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually, or as legislation dictates.

The Policy was adopted on (Minute Reference.) and will be reviewed in two years, or sooner should legislation dictate.