



# Wellingborough Town Council

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

### Introduction

The Town Council is committed to promoting equality and diversity, providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all.

### Implementation

In the implementation of this policy the Town Council will:

- a) Ensure 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 councillorship, age, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic background, or any other inappropriate distinction
- b) Promote diversity and equality for all officer and value the contributions made by individuals and groups of people from diverse cultural, ethnic, social economic and distinctive backgrounds
- c) Promote and sustain an inclusive and supportive work environment which affirms the equal and fair treatment of individuals in fulfilling their potential and does not afford unfair privilege to any individual or group
- d) treat part time officer fairly and equally
- e) challenge inequality and less favourable treatment wherever practicable
- f) promote greater participation of under-represented groups by encouraging positive action to address inequality
- g) promote an environment free of harassment and bullying on any grounds in relation to all officers, Councillors, contractors and visitors attending the Council's offices or meetings.

To improve access and opportunity to employment and training we will:

- a. Implement our Equality and Diversity Policy in our role as an employer
- b. Demonstrate our commitment in the way the Town Council:
  - recruits and selects people, trains and develops people,
  - recognise the abilities that individuals demonstrate,
  - expect the highest standards of Officer conduct and behaviour
  - not accept any form of unfair treatment, unlawful discrimination, bullying or harassment or removal of dignity by any of our Officers or to any of our Officers
  - Review and develop procedures in the context of equality and diversity.

The task of promoting social inclusion, tackling unlawful discrimination and encouraging equal opportunities are key issues for Wellingborough Town Council. The Council is committed to:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advancing equality of opportunity between different groups
- fostering good relations between different groups

### **Scope of the Policy**

This policy is designed to value diversity and to ensure equality of opportunity and access to services and that no one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of:

- a. Race (i.e. colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality or citizenship).
- b. Gender reassignment
- c. Disability
- d. Sex
- e. Sexual orientation
- f. Age
- g. Religion or belief
- h. Caring for others
- i. Trade Union or political activities
- j. Pregnancy and Maternity
- k. Marriage and Civil Partnership

(This list is not exhaustive.)

## **Objective**

The objective of this policy is to improve delivery, information and access to services we will:

- a. Ensure all Officers, contractors and users of our services are informed about our Equality and Diversity Policy
- b. Apply equal opportunities principles to work undertaken for the council by external contractors, other organisations in receipt of council funding and in work with our partners
- c. Rectify any elements of our work which have the potential for unlawful discrimination and prejudice

## **Promoting**

To promote equality and diversity with other partners we will:

- a. Promote tolerance and respect between diverse groups and individuals
- b. Acknowledge and celebrate, wherever possible, the variety of lifestyles and cultures within the town
- c. Challenge all forms of unlawful discrimination within the Town Council and the wider community
- d. Support the development of communities and assist them in challenging unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying and violence.

## **Responsibility and Liability**

All individuals remain personally responsible for ensuring that they act within the law. The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that officers perform their duties in a lawful manner and that proper training and support is provided accordingly. In certain circumstances the Town Council could be vicariously liable for actions carried out by officer purportedly in the Town Council's name.

Any officer or councillor may be personally liable if, whilst on Council business and despite guidance and training from the Council, they behave illegally in respect of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Equality Aims Age**

The Town Council will eliminate unlawful age discrimination and will review policies (including retirement) to ensure that they comply. Sexual Orientation the Town Council will eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender.

Disability The Town Council will remove barriers to participation by disabled people, wherever possible. Officer who become disabled whilst working with the Council will be offered reasonable adjustments to enable them to continue working.

## **Race/Ethnic Origin**

The Town Council will encourage participation of minority ethnic groups in its activities. Religion The Town Council will respect people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds and will give due regard to the needs and requirements of people who adhere to a range of cultural and religious beliefs. This will include officer needs in relation to dietary requirements, and requests for leave and facilities for religious observance.

## **Equal Pay**

The Council is committed to equal pay in employment. It believes its male and female Officers should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, the Council will endeavor to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.

## **Officer Responsibilities**

Officers have a duty to co-operate with the Council to make sure that this Policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying. Action will be taken under the Council's disciplinary procedure against any Officer who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation.

Serious breaches of this Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the Officer liable to summary dismissal.

Officers should also bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination or harassment. Officers who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

Officers must draw the attention of their Manager/Supervisor to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or suspected cases of harassment or bullying. They must not victimise or retaliate against an Officer who has made allegations or complaints of unlawful discrimination or harassment or who has provided information about such unlawful discrimination or harassment. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedure.

The Council will also take appropriate action against any third parties or Councillors who are found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful harassment against its Officers.

### **Reporting Complaints**

All allegations of unlawful discrimination or harassment will be dealt with in line with the council's complaints procedure.