



Shildon Town Council

Equality and Diversity Policy

Adopted	14 October 2019	
Next Review		

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. General Statement of Policy

Shildon Town Council is committed to providing and promoting equal opportunities, eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our community. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all and not to discriminate on grounds of sex (gender), marital or civil partnership status, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment or age. These are known as “protected” characteristics.

2. The Town Council’s commitment under this Equality & Diversity Policy is:

As an Employer

- To ensure that our recruitment and selection procedures are fair and equitable
- To train all concerned on equal opportunities issues
- To make reasonable adjustments to the workplace to minimise barriers to employment faced by disabled people
- To set clear standards of behaviours and promptly deal with any instances of inappropriate behaviour, including discrimination, harassment and bullying.

As a Service Provider

- To minimise the barriers faced by people using the Town Council’s building and facilities
- To train staff to recognise the diverse needs of the people we serve

3. Who does the Policy and Code of Practice apply to:

- 3.1 This Policy and Code of Practice will apply to all employees and Elected Members.

4. Responsibility

- 4.1 Every step will be taken to ensure that individuals, both within the employment of the Town Council and those affected by its actions, are

treated equally and that decisions are made within the spirit of equality for all.

- 4.2 Any employee who commits an act of discrimination or personal harassment will be liable to disciplinary action.

5. Distribution of the policy and Code of Practice

- 5.1 Employees and Elected members of the Council will be made fully aware of this Policy and Code of Practice and must adhere to its requirements.

- 5.2 New employees and job applicants will be informed of this Policy and Code of Practice during recruitment and a copy provided as part of their induction pack.

6. Complaints Procedure

- 6.1 Internal and external job applicants who think that they have been unfairly treated during the recruitment and selection process should direct their complaints to the Town Clerk who will initiate and monitor appropriate action.

- 6.2 The provisions of the policy will be covered by the Council's established disciplinary and grievance procedures.

- 6.3 Employees who feel that they have been discriminated against in relation to recruitment, promotion, or training opportunities on the grounds of gender, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, age, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or disability should pursue their complaints through the Council's grievance procedure.

Code of Practice

Employer

1. Code of Practice

1.1 The purpose of the Policy and Code of Practice is to give practical guidance to promote equality of opportunity within the Council for all employees and potential employees in accordance with the principles set out in the Equality and Diversity Policy.

1.2 This code does not seek to cover all circumstances at this stage. It will be expanded and developed as necessary as the Council identifies areas of concern and will be amended to form a comprehensive guide.

2. Discrimination Based on Stereotyped Decision Making

2.1 Persons responsible for making decisions affecting access to jobs, training or promotion may unintentionally use stereotypes in their decision making. It is the tendency to see others as stereotypes, which can lead most easily to discriminatory practices. It has an undesirable tendency to either negatively affect the chances of success of certain applicants or serves to channel them into particular occupations or positions deemed appropriate to the particular stereotype. It is essential, therefore, that all employees making decisions affecting access to jobs, training or promotion guard against discrimination based on common assumptions, that individuals because of their sex, race, marital status, colour nationality, disability etc. possess characteristics that make them unsuitable for employment in certain types of jobs.

3. Recruitment, Promotion and Selection

3.1 The recruitment, promotion and selection process is of crucial importance to this policy and in order to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination it must be carried out according to consistent and objective job related criteria.

The main steps in the process are detailed below: -

4. Vacancy

4.1 Timetable – recruitment takes place in pressurised circumstances. For the process to be carried out as efficiently as possible, it will be essential

that a clear timetable is drawn up. This will ensure that interviewers and interviewees know when they need to be available.

4.2 The criteria listed in the job profile should be the considered specification of the minimum requirements of the job and experience essential/desirable to meet those requirements and carry out the job satisfactorily. The criteria should be strictly relevant to the job and not necessarily restrictive or inflated so as to exclude particular disadvantaged groups, for example, care should be taken when:

- a) Requiring specific qualifications rather than the ability or potential ability to do the job;
- b) Applying age barriers or minimum periods of relevant experiences:
- c) Applying restrictions relating to physical ability etc

When publishing vacancies, all applicants should be informed of the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy. Information regarding vacancies should be prominently displayed to ensure full implementation of the policy.

4.3 The Council will ensure that the application form used by the Council does not ask questions which are detrimental to the Equality and Diversity Policy in that they require information which is irrelevant to consider for the post in question.

5. Shortlisting

5.1 Shortlisting will be based on the job and experience and capability specification alone.

6. Interviewing

6.1 All persons making appointments must endeavour to conduct interviews on an objective basis and shall deal only with each applicant's suitability for the job and ability to fulfil the job requirements. For example, candidates should not be asked questions about their personal circumstances, political affiliations or family commitments. Where necessary, to ensure their availability for unusual work variations, this should be done in an objective manner and not be personalised.

7. Guidance and Training

7.1 The Town Council will, within the resources available, introduce procedures within its training programme to assist the implementation

of the policy in such areas as staff development and information to members/employees on recruitment practices.

8. Monitoring

- 8.1 The Council will continue to monitor the aims and objectives of the Equality and Diversity Policy and address imbalances of opportunity when necessary.

9. Employee Training

- 9.1 The Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of its employees. The principles of the policy must be applied in considering training for individuals and teams within the Council.

Code of Practice

Service Provider

- 1 Provision of Services to the Community
 - 1.1 Provision of services to the community will be based on principles of fairness and accessibility for all sections of the community.
 - 1.2 The Council will comply with the guidance set out in the Code of Practice in force from time to time under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the provision of goods, facilities or services to the community.
 - 1.3 The Council will seek to ensure that all its services are publicised widely and that, as far as reasonably, the timing of events and access to facilities and building are designed to ensure that minority groups are not discriminated against