



# Wotton-under-Edge Town Council

## Equal Opportunities Policy

*Updated June 2016*

### **LEGAL POSITION**

It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the following grounds:

- **age**
- **disability**
- **gender reassignment**
- **marriage and civil partnership**
- **pregnancy and maternity**
- **race**
- **religion or belief**
- **sex**
- **sexual orientation**

Under the Equality Act 2010 these are known as “protected characteristics”.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all employees and elected members, 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, victimization or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

### **SCOPE**

All employees and elected members whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees and elected members 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 and elected member is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. This is further defined in the Dignity at Work policy adopted by the council. We will:

- Actively identify the individual needs of employees and elected members and make reasonable adjustments to the working environment where necessary.
- Ensure that all employees and elected members have equal access to training and development opportunities in line with their needs and abilities
- Provide employees and elected members with opportunities to influence the development of our policies and practices
- Give serious consideration to requests for flexible working arrangements
- Provide training and guidance to employees and elected members so that they are aware of the council’s Equality and Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policies and their legal responsibilities and rights
- Treat employees and elected members fairly with dignity and respect, maintaining a working environment that is inclusive, free of discrimination, harassment and bullying
- Encourage employees and elected members to report discrimination, unacceptable language and behaviour to the Town Clerk

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 of our equal opportunities policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings. Employees and elected members are entitled to complain about discrimination or harassment or victimization through the council's Grievance procedure.

This policy is fully supported by all Members of the council and adopts the model contract as devised by the employee professional body in the local government sector (the Society of Local Council Clerks).

The policy will be monitored and reviewed every two years. Other Personnel policies will be reviewed against the values stated in this main Equal Opportunities policy to ensure that the council strives to remain an Equal Opportunities employer.

**Uses of Policy** – Induction of staff and Members, decisions relating to Training and Development, Promotion, Remuneration, Retirement, cross-referenced to Grievance, Disciplinary and Dignity at Work Policies.