



## Equality and Diversity Policy

*Reviewed Jan 2020, next Review Jan 2022*

### 1) Introduction

- i) Wotton-under-Edge Town Council is an equal opportunities employer. We are committed to equality of opportunity and to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no applicant, member of staff or elected member receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance. It seeks also to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.
- ii) We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. All employees and elected members are covered by this policy and, for employees, it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion. These areas are monitored and policies and practices are amended if necessary to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.
- iii) The Town Clerk has particular responsibility for implementing and monitoring the Equality and Diversity in employment policy and, as part of this process, all personnel policies and procedures are administered with the objective of promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unfair or unlawful discrimination.
- iv) All employees, workers, self-employed contractors whether part time, full time or temporary and elected members will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of need, aptitude and ability. All employees and elected members will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and collective resources will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town Council.
- v) Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in the Town Council as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for applicants and staff lies with the Town Clerk, all individuals have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of every employee and elected member to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout the Town Council.

### 2) Commitment as an Employer

- i) To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued.
- ii) Every employee, worker or self-employed contractor is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

- iii) Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- iv) Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- v) We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

### **3) Commitment as a Service Provider**

- i) We aim to provide services to which all clients are entitled regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, offending past, caring responsibilities or social class.
- ii) We will make sure that our services are delivered equitably and meet the diverse needs of our service users and clients by assessing and meeting the diverse needs of our clients.

### **4) Equal Opportunity Policy Statements**

#### **AGE**

We will:

- ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity;
- ensure that people of working age are given equal access to our employment, training, development and promotion opportunities; and
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people.

#### **DISABILITY**

We will:

- provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services and employment opportunities;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people; and
- seek to continue to improve access to information by ensuring availability of: loop systems; Braille facilities; alternative formatting; and sign language interpretation.

#### **RACE**

We will:

- challenge racism wherever it occurs;
- respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents; and
- actively promote race equality in the Town Council.

#### **GENDER**

We will:

- challenge discriminatory assumptions about women and men;
- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against women and men;
- offer equal access for women and men to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same; and
- provide support to prevent discrimination against transsexual people who have or who are about to undergo gender reassignment.

#### **SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

We will:

- ensure that we take account of the needs of lesbians and gay men; and

- promote positive images of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.

### **RELIGION OR BELIEF**

We will:

- ensure that employees' religion or beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible; and
- respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others.

### **PREGNANCY OR MATERNITY**

We will:

- Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity and that a positive image is promoted regardless of pregnancy or maternity;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the pregnancy or maternity of our employees; and
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account of the needs of our employees' pregnancy or maternity.

### **MARRIAGE OR CIVIL PARTNERSHIP**

We will:

- Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity and that a positive image is promoted regardless of marriage or civil partnership;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the marriage or civil partnership of our employees; and
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account of the needs of our employees' marriage or civil partnership.

### **EX-OFFENDERS**

We will:

- prevent discrimination against our employees regardless of their offending background (except where there is a known risk to children or vulnerable adults).

### **EQUAL PAY**

We will:

- ensure that all employees, male or female, have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value.

## **5) Policy Commitment**

i) This policy is fully supported by the Town Council.

ii) This policy will be monitored and reviewed at least every two years.

iii) We have clear procedures that enable our clients, candidates for jobs and employees to raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel they have been unfairly treated.

iv) Breaches of our equality and diversity policy will be regarded as gross misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the Council's Employee Disciplinary Procedure.