

DOVER TOWN COUNCIL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Adopted by Dover Town Council on 16th May 2019 (Min No: 9c)

POLICY STATEMENT

Dover Town Council recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the Council, its employees and councillors to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the Council to ensure that no employee or councillor receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the **protected characteristics**).

Our aim is that our workforce and councillors will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee and councillor feels respected and able to give of their best.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment and all elected councillors.

All employees and councillors, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training 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 organisation.

Our staff and councillors will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass staff, councillors or members of the public because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation in the provision of the Council's policies, ambitions and services.

This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

OUR COMMITMENT

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff and councillors are recognised and valued;
- Every employee and councillor is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated;
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff and councillors;
- To promote equality in the workplace which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense;
- We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness;
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings;
- This policy is fully supported by all staff and councillors;
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGEMENT

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. The Town Clerk and appropriate officers will ensure that:

- all their staff and councillors are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
- grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
- proper records are maintained.

The Town Clerk will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and councillors, including periodic departmental audits.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and councillors and the attitudes of staff and councillors are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff and councillors should:

- comply with the policy and arrangements;
- not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
- not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or councillors or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics;
- ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic;
- inform the Town Clerk if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

THIRD PARTIES

Third-party harassment occurs where a Dover Town Council employee is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers. Dover Town Council will not tolerate such actions against its staff or councillors, and the employee or councillor concerned should inform the Town Clerk at once that this has occurred. Dover Town Council will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

RELATED POLICIES AND ARRANGEMENTS

All employment policies, codes of conduct and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. Dover Town Council policies will be reviewed regularly, and any identified discriminatory elements removed.

RIGHTS OF DISABLED PEOPLE

Dover Town Council attaches particular importance to the needs of disabled people. Under the terms of this policy, the Town Clerk is required to:

- make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee who becomes disabled or facilitate the working of an elected councillor who is or becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of

special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB: The Town Clerk is expected to seek advice and guidance from external agencies where appropriate to maintain disabled people in employment);

- include disabled people in training/development programmes;
- give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

EQUALITY TRAINING

A series of regular briefing sessions will be held for staff on equality issues. These will be repeated as necessary. Equality information is also included in induction programmes.

Training will be provided for staff and councillors on this policy and the associated arrangements. All staff and councillors who have an involvement in the recruitment and selection process will receive training.

MONITORING

Dover Town Council deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation as a whole. Accordingly, a monitoring system will be introduced to measure the effectiveness of the policy and arrangements.

The system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employees and councillors by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion / beliefs, grade and length of service in current grade. Information regarding the number of staff and councillors who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained.

There will also be regular assessments to measure the extent to which recruitment to first appointment, internal promotion and access to training/development opportunities affect equal opportunities for all groups.

Where appropriate **equality impact assessments** will be carried out on the results of monitoring to ascertain the effect of the Company policies and our services / products may have on those who experience them.

The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.

If monitoring shows that Dover Town Council, or areas within it, are not representative, or that sections of our workforce are not progressing properly within Dover Town Council, then an action plan will be developed to address these issues. This will include a review of recruitment and selection procedures, Dover Town Council policies and practices as well as consideration of taking legal Positive Action.

GRIEVANCES/DISCIPLINE

Employees and councillors have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the Councils Complaints or Grievance procedures.

Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the Councils Disciplinary or Complaints procedure.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The effectiveness of this policy and associated arrangements will be reviewed annually.