

Equality & Diversity Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Eynsham Parish Council is an equal opportunities, public authority¹ 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 or member of staff receives unfavourable treatment due to a disability, or less favourable treatment on the grounds of other protected characteristics² (age, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation), pregnancy or maternity³, 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 subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.
- 1.2. As a public authority employer, we understand the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 1.3. We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. All employees are covered by this policy and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures, sickness and capability management 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.
- 1.4. The Clerk to the Council 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.
- 1.5. All employees, workers or self-employed contractors 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 Parish Council.

¹ Equality Act 2010 s149.

² Equality Act 2010 s4.

³ Equality Act 2020 s18.

1.6. Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in the Parish Council as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with the senior management team, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of every employee to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout the Parish Council.

2. Our Commitment as an Employer

- 2.1. To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued.
- 2.2. 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.
- 2.3. Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- 2.4. Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- 2.5. We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

3. Our Commitment as a Service Provider

- 3.1. 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.
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. This policy is fully supported by the senior management team.
- 3.4. This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.
- 3.5. 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.
- 3.6. Breaches of our equality and diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Equal Opportunity Policy Statements

The Council will positively promote/support all employees who have protected characteristics and will undertake the following:-

4. Age

- 4.1. Ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity.
- 4.2. Ensure that people of working age are given equal access to our employment, training, development and promotion opportunities.
- 4.3. Challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people.
- 4.4. Where Age is a factor in the Council's decision making, it must identify the legitimate aims it is pursuing to justify that decision.

5. Disability

- 5.1. Provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services and employment opportunities.
- 5.2. Challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people.
- 5.3. Seek to continue to improve access to information by ensuring availability of: loop systems; Braille facilities; alternative formatting; and sign language interpretation.
- 5.4. Conduct proper investigations into Employee health problems; including asking the Employee for consent to attend an appropriate medical assessment; to ensure that reasonable adjustments are based on qualified advice.

6. Marriage or Civil Partnership

- 6.1. Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity.
- 6.2. Challenge discriminatory assumptions about the marriage or civil partnership of our employees.
- 6.3. Ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account of the needs of our employees' marriage or civil partnership.

7. Race

- 7.1. Challenge racism wherever it occurs.
- 7.2. Respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents.
- 7.3. Actively promote race equality in the Parish Council.

8. Religion or belief

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

9. Sex and Gender Reassignment

- 9.1. Challenge discriminatory assumptions about women and men.
- 9.2. Take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against women and men.
- 9.3. Offer equal access for women and men to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same.
- 9.4. Provide support to prevent discrimination against transsexual people who have/who are about to undergo/who have undergone gender reassignment.

10. Sexual Orientation

- 10.1. Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity.
- 10.2. Challenge discriminatory assumptions about the sexual orientation of our employee.
- 10.3. Ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account of the needs of our employees regardless of sexual orientation.

11. Pregnancy or maternity

- 11.1. Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity regardless of pregnancy or maternity.
- 11.2. Challenge discriminatory assumptions about the pregnancy or maternity of our employees.
- 11.3. Ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account of the needs of our employees' pregnancy or maternity.

12. Ex-offenders

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

12.2. As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Eynsham Parish Council complies fully with the [code of practice](#) and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.

13. **Equal pay**

13.1. 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.