

Pilning & Severn Beach Parish Council

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Equal Opportunities Policy

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, 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.

Recruitment

All employers must follow certain procedures for recruitment to ensure that all applications are treated appropriately and fairly and that, all things being equal, no candidate is rejected because of their age, gender, race, sexuality or any other protected characteristic.

This means recruitment procedures must meet the following criteria:

- The job description must be set so that all applicants are assessed against the exact same criteria and nothing else.
- The post is advertised in a variety of locations, such as job centres, online and in the press so that it is available to as wide an audience as possible.



- An interview panel must be put in place so that more than one person's opinions are weighed in when deciding on whom to award the position to.
- All questions that are not relevant to the job must be excluded from the questionnaire. Applicants should not be asked about their age, race, religion or any other protected characteristic.
- Female applicants must be treated the same as male applicants. Disabled applicants must be treated the same as applicants with no disabilities. Pregnant applicants must be treated the same as non-pregnant women.

Scope

All employees whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration 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 council.

Our Commitment

Every employee 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.

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 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 annually/bi-annually. 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 Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Promotion, Remuneration, Retirement, cross-referenced to Grievance & Disciplinary Policies.