



FRAMLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

EQUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

1. Framlingham Town Council recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the Town Council and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the Town Council to ensure that no employee or job applicant 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**).
2. The Town Council 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.
3. All employees 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 their talents will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Town Council.
4. Our staff will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass customers or clients because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation in the provision of the Town Council's services.
5. 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 our staff are recognised and valued.
- Employees are 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.
- To promote equality in the workplace which we believe is good management practice
- 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.
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL:

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

The Town Council will ensure that:

- all staff 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 Finance Committee will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants, including periodic audits.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF:

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with each member of staff and the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, each member of staff 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 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 their superior if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

THIRD PARTIES:

Third-party harassment occurs where a Town Council employee is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers. The Town Council will not tolerate such actions against its staff, and the employee concerned should inform the Town Clerk at once that this has occurred. The 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 and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. The Company policies will be reviewed regularly and any discriminatory elements removed.

RIGHTS OF DISABLED PEOPLE:

The Town Council attaches particular importance to the needs of disabled people.

Under the terms of this policy, the Town Council is required to:

- make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB: managers are expected to seek advice on the availability of advice and guidance from external agencies 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:

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

GRIEVANCES/DISCIPLINE:

Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the Town Council Grievance or Harassment Procedures.

Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the Town Council Disciplinary Procedure.

REVIEW:

The effectiveness of this policy and associated arrangements will be reviewed annually by the Town Council.